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# **PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT STUDY**



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MELVYRN G. WINGETT  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

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FISCAL SERVICES SYSTEM

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### AGENDA ITEM NO.

December 12, 1978

### MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: Operational Audit of the Parks and Recreation Department

*Parks -- CA -- Fresno Co. --  
Management  
Fresno County. Parks + rec.  
dept.*

The Management Services Section of this office has concluded an operational audit of the Parks and Recreation Department. Dwayne Smith, Administrative Analyst III, conducted this study under the direction of Terence L. Henry, Principal Administrative Analyst. The following report is the result of several months of review of park and landscape areas, their operations, applicable legal guidelines and interviews with employees.

Our staff received the full cooperation of the Director of the Parks and Recreation Department and his staff during this study. Information provided by other departments, including the Public Works Department, Planning Department, and the Auditor-Controller, was also very useful in evaluating specific areas of the Department's operations.

### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that your Board approve the recommendations in the attached operational audit report for making the operation of the Parks and Recreation Department more effective and efficient.

### DISCUSSION

The Executive Summary highlights the conclusions and recommendations reached in the audit which are presented in detail in the body of the report. Significant potential annual savings totalling approximately \$76,274 which are attributable to improved organization and revised vacation scheduling are also noted in this summary on pages 3 and 4 and discussed in detail in the main report.



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We have reviewed these findings with the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation. He concurs with each of the recommendations.

#### Overall Assessment of Parks and Recreation Department

The Parks and Recreation Department is basically meeting its intended purposes of developing and maintaining park and landscaped areas. In the last few years, the Department has shown an increasing desire to improve park facilities, develop new ones and also improve the appearance of landscaped areas under its jurisdiction, such as Courthouse Park. The Department has applied for and received funding from several sources for park development such as the 1974 Park Bond Act and Revenue Sharing funds. Funding from these sources since 1974, totalling \$2,028,974, has been committed or expended. Several park improvement and development projects have been initiated or completed during the last five years with these funds. These have included construction of sprinkler systems, roads, restrooms, and picnic sites, and the opening of three new park areas. These include Choinumni Park with 170 acres (12 acres turfed and developed and 118 acres maintained for litter and weed control and tree trimming), Laton-Kingston Park with 102 acres (22 acres turfed and developed and 60 acres maintained for litter and weed control and tree trimming), and Skaggs Bridge Park with all 15 acres turfed and developed.

In 1973, responsibility for the maintenance of the 13 acre Liberty Cemetery was assumed by the Department. In 1974, approximately 86 acres were transferred to the Department. This included Courthouse Park and all other landscaped areas such as the Valley Medical Center complex that were formerly maintained by the Public Works Department. Eight miles or 32 acres of medians were added in 1975 and in 1977, 14 acres or 3.5 miles along Van Ness Extension were assigned to the Department for maintenance. The Department has demonstrated the ability to keep these widely scattered areas reasonably attractive.

The Department has kept abreast of new labor-saving grounds maintenance equipment such as more productive lawnmowers and lawn edging equipment. The ability to operate within their budget and at approximately the same overall staffing ratio to acres maintained has also been demonstrated during recent years.

Our recommendations are intended to encourage and aid department management to further improve the effectiveness



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and efficiency of current operations so that maximum development and maintenance value is derived from available resources.

### Scope Of The Study

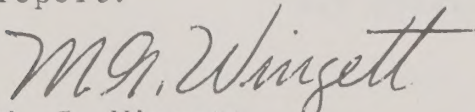
This operational audit was conducted because of the desire of the Director of the Department and our office to review the current department organization, the Recreation and Parks Plan, and current park and landscape maintenance operations of the Department.

Department requests to add an Administrative Services Assistant I/II and fill a vacant Assistant Parks Superintendent position have been held in abeyance pending this review. Also, the Department has expressed concern over the relevancy of the Recreation and Parks Plan since the basic plan was originally adopted in 1963. Several new park and landscaped areas have been added in the last several years, and the Department has expressed concern about the effect these new responsibilities might be having on the ability of the Department to perform grounds maintenance tasks adequately.

This operational audit also addressed several areas of management practices that appeared to have the greatest potential for developing recommendations for improved operations. We reviewed use of resources including staffing and equipment, direction of operations, controls and reports, and seasonal workload fluctuations. Review efforts also addressed department compliance with County ordinances and policies, and the Recreation and Parks Plan. Most of our recommendations stem from findings covering these areas of management concern.

Most of the work on this study was completed in the spring of 1978. Its findings were considered in formulating this office's recommendations for the 1978-79 Budget. The delay in its presentation until this time was made necessary by the temporary reassignment of personnel within this office to other duties which occurred after the passage of Proposition 13 on June 6, 1978.

The results of our review are presented in the following report.

  
M. G. Wingett  
County Administrative Officer

MGW:DS:cf



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### Purpose and Organization of Report

The purpose of this review was to provide Parks and Recreation Department management and the Board of Supervisors with an objective evaluation of the operations of this department. We have attempted to develop the findings in a constructive and positive manner to enable department management to operate more effectively and efficiently.

As a result of our operational audit review, 17 findings containing 39 recommendations have been prepared. For readability and continuity, findings have been grouped into six sections based upon their similarity of subject matter:

1. Department Organization
2. Staffing Requirements
3. Maintenance Standards and Deployment of Recourses
4. Planning and Development
5. Fiscal Procedures
6. Management Information and Park Usage

Each finding consists of up to six sections:

- A Finding Summary gives a brief description of the reason for the finding.
- A Statement of Condition describing the setting in which the finding is generated.
- A Criteria portion stating what standards or guidelines were used to evaluate the existing condition.
- An Effect section indicating the effect of the variance between current condition and the criteria.
- A Cause statement indicating the underlying reason for the effect.
- A Recommendation showing steps needed to remedy the cause of the situation.

A summary of the findings within each section of the report follows in the remainder of this introduction. For a more detailed review of the basis for each recommendation, the reader should refer to the particular findings in the main body of the report.

## I. Department Organization

Our study included reviewing the duties of first line supervisory personnel, and middle and upper management through confidential interviews and questionnaires. We reviewed their responsibilities and authority to carry out their duties, the assignment of duties to various positions for greatest effectiveness, and whether adequate time was being spent on the most important activities. The existing organization is shown in Exhibit I-A.

Currently, most routine department business, related budget preparation and control, and processing personnel matters such as leaves of absence and transfers, are performed by both the Parks Superintendent and Parks Development Coordinator. This situation tends to place the Parks Superintendent in a primarily reactive posture rather than actively directing department operations.

When a department reaches a size where staff functions consume the time of managers to the extent of a full-time equivalent position, it is desirable to specialize these functions in a primarily staff assignment. Line and staff responsibilities can be divided and accountability pinpointed to improve performance of both line managers and staff support. An additional position of Administrative Services Assistant I/II would be an appropriate classification to accomplish this assignment. However, because of financial constraints, we are recommending that the duties of the Parks Development Coordinator be broadened and the Parks Superintendent be relieved of some administrative duties. The Parks Development Coordinator would assume additional routine administrative tasks such as supervising the Account Clerk II position, and routine administrative and personnel matters including analyzing expenditure trends and ensuring adequate purchasing and personnel records are generated and maintained. The Parks Development Coordinator should be able to absorb these additional administrative duties due to not having the necessary financial resources to operate and maintain additional park development. See Exhibit II-C.

The distinction between the duties of the Supervising Parks Groundsman position and the Assistant Parks Superintendent assigned to the West division is not clear. Responsibilities for supervision of Senior Parks Groundsmen are not clearly assigned to the Supervising Parks Groundsman or the Assistant



Parks Superintendent. Communications from the Senior Parks Groundsman level on daily operations must often go through an additional layer of management (the Supervising Parks Groundsman) before action is taken or problems are resolved. Communications downward to the Senior Parks Groundsman and Parks Groundsman levels also are sometimes interpreted and routed through an additional level.

In order to more specifically assign responsibilities, enhance communications between line positions, and provide a more manageable span of control, the third Assistant Parks Superintendent position should be filled and the duties of the two Assistant Parks Superintendents and Supervising Parks Groundsman would be divided among three Assistant Parks Superintendents. This reassignment would allow each position to have a more manageable share of grounds maintenance responsibilities, and would permit removal of the Supervising Parks Groundsman level as an extra management layer between the Parks Superintendent and the leadperson positions of Senior Parks Groundsmen.

Communications through the chain of command should be encouraged by minimizing layers of review to the extent permitted by requirements for supervision and control. The complexity of functions, number of functions, and the span of control should be considered in assigning responsibilities among Assistant Parks Superintendents. Related functions should tend to be grouped to give managers maximum control over the resources needed to discharge their responsibilities. See Exhibit II-B.

We recommend the Parks Groundsman II position that repairs and transports equipment and reports to a Senior Parks Groundsman be deleted. The Senior Parks Groundsman also maintains inventory records. The functions of these two positions can be adequately performed by one position with a title more descriptive of the duties actually being performed, such as Storeroom Supervisor.

In order to implement organizational recommendations, as shown in Exhibit II-B, the vacant Assistant Parks Superintendent position should be filled, and one Senior Parks Groundsman should undergo a classification review to ensure it is appropriately classified. This Senior Parks Groundsman position is shown with the suggested title of Storeroom Supervisor. Assignment of the Senior Parks Groundsmen, Senior Tree Trimmer, Parks Maintenance Men, and landscaped and park areas to the Assistant Parks Superintendents is also shown in this exhibit.

The deletion of the two positions of Supervising Parks Groundsman and one position of Parks Groundsman II, and the reclassification of a Senior Parks Groundsman to Storeroom Supervisor,

will result in a net budgetary savings of \$48,129 per year. See Exhibit III. The savings from deleting the two positions of Supervising Parks Groundsman (\$32,853) has already been realized in the 1978-79 budget. The third Assistant Parks Superintendent position has been filled.

## II. Staffing Requirements

Currently, the park areas are primarily staffed by permanent full-time year-round personnel. The Department has also felt the need for additional extra-help personnel in the summer months. During the spring and summer seasons of April through September, additional extra-help positions are filled, varying during the last three years from a maximum of 12 positions per year to 41 positions per year depending upon funding availability.

For each permanent grounds maintenance position filled at the Parks Groundsman II level on a year-round basis, the total cost is approximately \$13,380 for salary and fringe benefits. At the Parks Groundsman III level, the annual cost is \$15,380 for salary and fringe benefits. Each extra-help position filled continuously for six months during the spring and summer would cost \$5,635 for salary, Social Security, and unemployment insurance benefits.

Year-round full-time staffing should be kept to the minimum level required to meet winter workload and provide leadership to spring and summer seasonal help. The Parks and Recreation Department incurs unnecessary costs by relying too heavily on permanent full-time employees instead of utilizing a smaller core of permanent full-time employees in the winter months and hiring extra-help personnel to increase the work force during the busier season of approximately April through September.

The appropriate year-round staffing level of permanent grounds maintenance personnel should be that number necessary to meet the lowest seasonal workload level and vacation coverage.

The Department and the CAO should work together to determine the minimum level of permanent position staffing needed to maintain winter level maintenance standards.

As a temporary measure, permanent full-time grounds maintenance positions should be frozen as they become vacant and only be filled with extra-help personnel for the summer workload peak. This policy should remain in effect until the Department and CAO develop a methodology for calculating the appropriate year-round staffing level of permanent grounds maintenance positions.



Approximately 12,000 person-hours or six full-time equivalent (FTE) positions of extra-help positions were funded during the 1977 summer season. These positions were in addition to the regular grounds maintenance staff. A review of vacation use during the 1977 calendar year indicated that 4,496 person-hours of vacation were taken from April through September by Parks Groundsmen I through Senior Parks Groundsmen. This is equal to 2.16 FTE positions. Approximately one-half of the permanent employees in these classifications took one week or more of vacation during this time and accounted for approximately 56% of vacation time taken by these grounds maintenance staff during the entire year. This indicates that the Department relies more heavily than necessary on extra-help personnel during the summer months because permanent employees go on vacation.

The Department should advise new employees that vacations will normally be taken only during the slower winter months when extra-help employees are not being utilized. The Department should promulgate a vacation policy that encourages all employees to take winter vacations, and discourages summer vacations. A vacation policy should only allow summer vacations if a hardship would be created for an employee. A revised policy for employees eligible for summer vacations has been put into effect for summer vacations in 1979.

### III. Maintenance Standards and Deployment of Resources

#### Standards of Service

Maintenance standards define the appearance, safety, and botanical health conditions expected for each area. Standards for the maintenance of park and landscaped areas are not currently defined by the Department in writing, but consist primarily of the visual impression being one of a neat and orderly appearance. Parks Groundsmen perform their maintenance duties based upon past practices and the day to day work direction of Senior Parks Groundsmen. Frequent field surveys by Supervising Parks Groundsmen and higher management personnel are conducted to detect deficiencies in appearance and redirect priorities.

Standards are necessary to ensure that landscaped areas are adequately, yet not excessively maintained. Specific written standards of maintenance describing what areas are to be maintained, and condition parameters to be permitted such as upper and lower limits of grass height at varying times of year, should be established and utilized by department personnel at all areas maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department. This will promote the most efficient and effective utilization of available department resources by defining workload to help determine how to allocate labor and equipment resources to each area at varying times of the year.

## Work Programming

Assignment of regularly recurring work performed by grounds maintenance personnel, spray and tree trimming crews, and Parks Maintenance Men is not scheduled based on a planned maintenance program, but is done on a day-to-day basis.

A routine maintenance program for mechanical and structural facilities and grounds maintenance for park and landscaped areas should be utilized. It should specify activities and include interval schedules showing the frequency of maintenance for particular pieces of equipment, structures and grounds maintenance areas to meet service level standards discussed in the previous section. A scheduled program for weed spraying and tree trimming should also be utilized.

Estimated standard hours for completion of a repair or maintenance function, including grounds maintenance and tree trimming, and actual hours spent, should be recorded on work orders. Standard hours should be compared to actual to detect variations. Standards are normal amounts of time that should be spent on a project. This type of comparison will give management an indication of those activities that should be reviewed to ensure productivity is acceptable and to maintain cost control.

## Assignments of New Park and Landscaped Areas

The Parks and Recreation Department has been assigned several new areas to maintain during the last five years. Since 1974 the Department has assumed the maintenance responsibility for over 85 additional acres of landscaped areas and three new parks totaling 227 acres. Our visual inspections of park and landscaped areas and interviews with department staff did not reveal any visible adverse impact on the Department's operations as a result of workload additions of these new areas.

The effect of additional areas being assigned to the Department is difficult to anticipate for budget purposes. Without clearly defined maintenance standards from which to design facility work plans, the Parks and Recreation Department budget may have been increased more than necessary to meet new facility workload increases. Since existing facilities continue to meet visual standards and overall ratios of maintenance staff to acres maintained is approximately the same, it is likely the budget has grown sufficiently to accommodate maintenance of new facilities.

## Budgeting and Deployment of Resources

Without specific standards for maintenance of park and landscaped areas, it is difficult to determine if current practices of deploying available personnel and equipment



provide sufficient or excessive resources to maintain individual park and landscaped areas.

Personnel and equipment should be assigned to park and landscaped areas based upon specific maintenance standards and work programs. Assignments should be adjusted in response to changes in standards or work programs at the various areas maintained by the Department.

#### IV. Planning and Development

##### Planning for New Park Development

The current Recreation and Parks Plan, which is part of the County General Plan, was first adopted in 1963. It was designed as a general guide to anticipate and meet park and recreation needs for the County. The plan does not include estimates of development or operating costs of existing or proposed park areas. The plan does recommend the County's major emphasis, at least from 1963-1973, should be toward land acquisition to meet the present and future demand for parks. It recommended the acquisition of a total of 1,660 acres. The County has assumed maintenance responsibility, purchased or acquired rights to approximately 1,328 acres of parks and landscaped areas since 1963. Of this amount, approximately 444 acres have been developed as turfed areas or areas actively maintained for litter and weed control. This is a considerable increase in new areas to be maintained.

The current parks plan has served as a useful guide, and the goals of the plan developed in 1963 and since amended have been substantially achieved. However, the current parks plan is now outdated and probably unreliable as an assessment of services needed by current and future populations. It does not fully consider facilities available to meet those needs. Therefore, it cannot be expected to adequately identify the number and type of additional facilities and locations needed.

The Planning Department has recognized the need to update the current parks plan. However, it has not been able to devote the necessary time to accomplish a completed revision because of the immediate need to make other revisions to the County General Plan in order to conform to State mandates. There is Revenue Sharing money allocated in the 1978-79 Budget for a consultant to update the Recreation and Parks element of the General Plan. Also, the Planning Department has scheduled time in the 1978-79 fiscal year to assist in such a review.

A park master plan should be prepared by the Department for each facility and approved by the Board of Supervisors prior

to developing project plans and proposals to build new parks or modify or expand existing park facilities.

### Planning for Specific Park Development

The current process for determining the type of development at new park areas or planning for site acquisition includes a review by affected County departments, other government agencies, and the Parks and Recreation Commission. Plans for the total development of existing park areas, such as Lost Lake, Avocado Lake, and Kearney Park, have not been developed. Modifications or additions to these areas are done on a project basis within each park. Decisions to develop parcels for park purposes should be based on their compatibility with the Recreation and Parks General Plan, public input, available funding for improvements, adequacy of existing park facilities, and the County's ability to support estimated operating and maintenance costs.

Currently, it is not possible to ensure the orderly and timely development of new facilities at existing or new park properties without more thorough and systematic planning. The best and most effective use of available funds cannot be assured by the Board of Supervisors if they are not completely informed of all benefits, disadvantages, and probable cost impacts of each acquisition and development. The Parks and Recreation Department, with assistance from the Planning Department, should follow a more systematic park acquisition and development process. This process should include provisions for Board of Supervisors policy review of individual park development master plans, and Board approval of specific land acquisitions and projects based upon site evaluation plans.

Until there is a risk of losing categorical park acquisition and/or development funding, acquisition and development of new park areas should be suspended until the Recreation and Parks element of the General Plan is updated.

### Landscape Plans

Landscaped locations are areas around County buildings. While landscaping master plans have not been prepared to clearly define the type of landscaping such as lawns, shrubs, perennials, and annuals for specific areas of each landscaped location, most are generally attractive and well maintained. Landscaping has generally either been determined by plans for new construction (building or parking lots), or by an evaluation of particular types of landscaping at certain locations. In some instances, modifications of the type of landscaping have been undertaken by the Department such as at Courthouse Park where some landscaped sections are being replanted with a wide variety of plants, many requiring more



maintenance than similar areas. These modifications have also been made without a master plan defining limits on the amount of area for each intensity of landscaping. However, the appearance of Courthouse Park has been noticeably improved in the last few years.

Development of landscaping master plans should expressly consider the amount of labor and other grounds maintenance costs attendant to their execution. Maintenance standards and work plans should be developed to assess the ongoing impact of landscape plans on the Department's maintenance resources. Where a landscape plan alters an existing landscape pattern, conversion costs should be similarly assessed.

Specific procedures should be developed and followed for ensuring the timely Parks and Recreation Department involvement in developing landscaping designs at new County facilities including their input on cost implications of maintenance requirements of alternative designs.

## V. Fiscal Procedures

The Department has generally demonstrated an ability to keep expenditures within budgeted amounts. The one exception is the Transportation and Travel account which in two of the last three fiscal years exceeded the budgeted amount.

Currently, vehicle usage is monitored by utilizing the monthly Auditor's report to attempt to keep costs within the budgeted amount. Targets for usage of assigned vehicles have not been developed. Only occasionally is usage for particular vehicles compared with vehicles assigned to comparable areas to detect variations of use.

Vehicle and equipment usage should be closely monitored and controlled by regularly reviewing individual usage patterns. These usage patterns should be within acceptable usage standards for the particular vehicle assignment. If usage is not within these prescribed standards, management should investigate and where appropriate, take corrective action.

The hourly billing rates for grounds maintenance services provided to other local agencies were not in conformance with a resolution adopted by the Board of Supervisors dated December 28, 1976 (Exhibit V). This resolution indicates that only direct costs and not County overhead charges (i.e., indirect costs) are to be charged other local agencies for services provided by the County. The resolution also indicates that entire County costs (direct and indirect) will be recovered from the State and Federal governments and regional agencies. We found the Department was not using the Auditor-Controller's hourly rates to bill other County departments or other agencies for landscape maintenance.

To ensure appropriate County cost recovery for services provided regional agencies, and for County department costs of operating State and Federal programs and grant projects, the Auditor-Controller should specify and the Parks and Recreation Department should use a billing rate structure which reflects all costs. The rate structure used to bill local agencies should comply with the Board of Supervisors Resolution of December 28, 1976 to exclude indirect costs. Those recommendations were implemented for billings beginning in August, 1978.

## VI. Management Information and Park Usage

Currently, accurate data on the number of visitors to the parks is not kept except for the two campgrounds at Choinumni and Pine Flat. Several park personnel did indicate during interviews that the parks receive the heaviest usage during the weekends and holidays from approximately April through September. The number of visitors decreases significantly during the period of October through March.

The Department has attempted to consider usage of parks in planning for specific park projects. For example, the replacement and addition of roads and picnic sites at Avocado Lake Park has been based on previous heavy usage of this facility.

Appropriate economical means to monitor current park usage should be utilized to periodically validate the continuing need for existing parks and help determine where additional park development or expansion would be desirable. Accurate usage information would also aid in deploying personnel to adequately respond to litter and trash pick up needs and other maintenance activities that vary with public use of parks.

The Department currently maintains a wide variety of small landscape maintenance equipment such as lawn mowers and edgers. While the current procedure for determining equipment replacement or repair should be even more specific and formalized, the Department has taken positive steps in the last year to improve records of equipment repair and replacement. Also, generally the Department has kept abreast of new equipment technology and acquired new laborsaving devices such as weed trimmers.

Currently, only minimal statistics on department productivity and workload are collected. The Department should have an explicit, written policy setting forth its management information objectives and requirements. These objectives might be to measure activity on a one-time or ongoing basis, in order to assess productivity, detect variations from norms,



shift resources to meet workload changes or trends, plan manpower or other resource requirements, determine the effects of policy and procedure changes, or other purposes. The definition of specific information requirements to meet chosen objectives should evolve carefully to be certain to collect only information most useful to management in monitoring and assessing department activities.

We have reviewed Sections 13.12 through 13.16.050 of the Fresno County Ordinance Code which prescribe duties and regulations for the Parks and Recreation Department. Also reviewed were several Board of Supervisors resolutions adopting the parks and trails element of the General Plan and authorizing the expenditures of various grant and bond funds for park development. The Department appears to be in compliance with these ordinances and directives.

Incidents of vandalism, parking or driving vehicles in unauthorized areas, and burglaries of storage areas do occur in the parks and camping areas. During a one year period from May 1, 1977 to May 1, 1978, there were four reported cases of vandalism amounting to a total loss of \$3,040, and eight incidences of theft amounting to \$2,159. Barriers of large rocks or posts embedded in the ground have been placed along some park roads to discourage illegal parking. To minimize losses and damages to storage areas, vaults for tool and equipment storage have been constructed and burglar alarms installed at some storage buildings located in the parks. Also, staggered staffing at some park areas ensures personnel are assigned to the parks on weekends when their presence discourages regulatory violations. The Department's personnel have no law enforcement authority, but their presence serves as a deterrent to violations of park rules and property damage.

Preventive measures, such as security vaults and vehicle barriers along roads, should be included in the development plans and provided in the initial construction of park facilities.





## SECTION I. DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

### 1. ORGANIZATION

#### FINDING SUMMARY

The organization of the Parks and Recreation Department should be modified to improve delegation and accountability and give better direction and control to department operations.

#### STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The present organization of the Parks and Recreation Department is shown in Exhibit I-A. Exhibits I-B and I-C indicate the distribution of responsibilities among middle and upper level managers in the Department. Exhibit I-B shows the main responsibilities of the Parks Development Coordinator and the Parks Superintendent. The Parks Development Coordinator reports to the Director and is responsible for coordinating park development grants and contracts with other County departments and State and Federal agencies, coordinating budget preparation, administering agreements with concessionaires, and administering special work programs. The Parks Superintendent also reports to the Director and is responsible for all field operations, budget controls, routine personnel matters, and performance of most department personnel below this level except for two clerical positions.

Exhibit I-C shows the next level of management personnel. The two filled positions of Assistant Parks Superintendent are responsible for assigned park areas and supervising grounds maintenance personnel, specialized weed spraying and tree trimming crews, and Parks Maintenance Men. The third position is being held vacant pending the completion of this study. Each of the filled Assistant Parks Superintendent positions also have a Supervising Parks Groundsman position reporting to them who share the parks maintenance responsibilities. One of the Supervising Parks Groundsman positions recently became vacant. A replacement is not currently being sought, pending the completion of this review.

In the West division, five Parks Maintenance Men report to the Assistant Parks Superintendent, and the five Senior Parks Groundsmen assigned to various geographic areas report

to the Supervising Parks Groundsman. In the East, the six Senior Parks Groundsmen and two Parks Maintenance Men report directly to the Assistant Parks Superintendent because of the Supervising Parks Groundsman vacancy.

In both divisions, each Senior Parks Groundsman directly supervises up to six Parks Groundsmen. The Parks Maintenance Men, while not supervising other employees as the Senior Parks Groundsmen do, are a skilled classification. Because of the geographic dispersment of the parks, the Parks Maintenance Men must work in an independent capacity with minimal supervision and direction.

Assignment of duties to first line supervisory and middle management personnel has been based upon both specific functions, such as the tree crew, and/or based upon the maintenance assignment of facilities within geographic proximity to one another. We reviewed these assignments, and the views of the Department's management and supervisory staff were sought by confidential interviews and questionnaires. We reviewed their responsibilities and authority to carry out their duties, the assignment of duties to various positions for greatest effectiveness, and whether adequate time was being spent on the most important activities.

Currently, most routine department business, related budget preparation and control, and processing personnel matters such as leaves of absence and transfers, are performed by the Parks Superintendent and Parks Development Coordinator. The Parks Superintendent position is using approximately 60 percent of his time and the Parks Development Coordinator is using approximately 30 percent of his time on these types of routine matters. This situation tends to place these top management personnel in a primarily reactive posture rather than actively directing department operations. For instance, department management could be strengthened if the time of these managers could be redirected toward developing specific maintenance standards and work programs for parks maintenance personnel.

The distinction between the duties of the Supervising Parks Groundsman position and the Assistant Parks Superintendent assigned to the West division is not clear. Responsibilities for supervision of Senior Parks Groundsmen are not clearly assigned to the Supervising Parks Groundsmen or the Assistant Parks Superintendent. Communications from the Senior Parks Groundsman level on daily parks operations must often go through an additional layer of management (the Supervising Parks Groundsman) before action is taken or problems are resolved. Communications downward to the Senior Parks Groundsmen and Parks Groundsmen levels also are sometimes interpreted and routed through an additional level. This results in conflicting instructions to Senior Parks Groundsmen and confusion as to which directions to follow first.



## CRITERIA

Job responsibilities should be clearly defined and authority should be delegated to the lowest responsible management level capable of making decisions within policy guidelines and work plans set down by department management. This is to encourage management responsiveness, free higher level managers from distractions of routine tasks and daily work direction, and establish better accountability.

When a department reaches a size where staff functions consume the time of managers to the extent of a full-time equivalent position, it is desirable to specialize these functions in a primarily staff assignment. Line and staff responsibilities can be divided and accountability pinpointed to improve performance of both line managers and staff support.

Sufficient authority should be delegated to managers to ensure they can successfully perform assigned responsibilities.

Communications through the chain of command should be encouraged by minimizing layers of review to the extent permitted by requirements for supervision and control.

The responsibility for the development and implementation of specific maintenance standards and work programs for each park and landscaped area should be assigned to the management position with primary responsibility for planning and directing the parks maintenance operations.

The complexity of functions, number of functions, and the span of control, should be considered in assigning responsibilities among Assistant Parks Superintendents. Related functions should tend to be grouped to give managers maximum control over the resources needed to discharge their responsibilities.

## EFFECT

The Parks Superintendent is assigned too many routine and supervisory duties which detract from oversight duties of planning, directing, and controlling maintenance operations.

Landscape and work assignment decisions are made at lower levels without sufficient guidelines and management control. The Parks Superintendent is preoccupied with administrative details and extensive inspection touring of facilities to maintain informal control of department activities.

Communications about field operations are not always effectively routed through the organization.

The vacant Assistant Parks Superintendent position causes excessive span of control at that level. The vacant Supervising Parks Groundsman in the East therefore places an excessive span of control on the Assistant Parks Superintendent.

It appears that the current organization does not clearly distribute job responsibilities between the Supervising Parks Groundsman and Assistant Parks Superintendent in the West division. The responsibilities of these positions tend to overlap and duplicate each other causing divided responsibility, inconsistent direction, lost accountability, and gaps in communication.

#### CAUSE

The current organization does not clearly place many routine administrative responsibilities at the most cost effective level in the organization. Many operating decision responsibilities are placed appropriately but without sufficient guidelines for standards and productivity. The Parks Superintendent is preoccupied with routine tasks to the detriment of planning, direction and control responsibilities.

The Supervising Parks Groundsman level in the organization obscures and delays communications and is unnecessary.

The present span of control at the Assistant Parks Superintendent level does not allow this management level to concentrate enough on directing and controlling operations.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

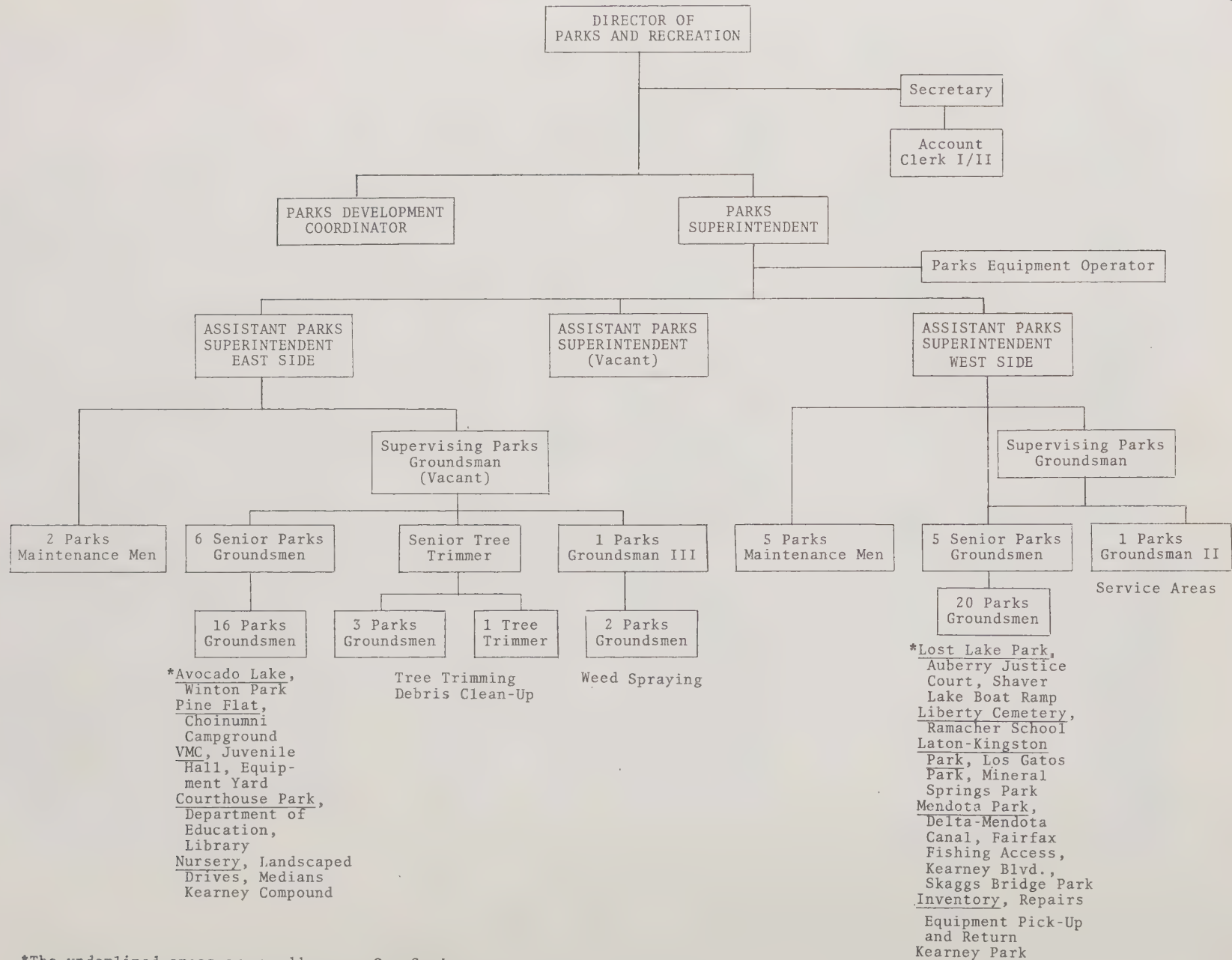
1. That the Department be reorganized as described in Exhibits II-A, B, C, D, and III which will more effectively utilize management resources.
2. That the vacant Assistant Parks Superintendent position be filled and one Senior Parks Groundsman be retitled to Storeroom Supervisor, subject to classification review by the Personnel Management Division. The deletion of the two positions of Supervising Parks Groundsman and one position of Parks Groundsman II will result in a net budgetary savings of \$48,129 per year. The savings from deleting the two positions of Supervising Parks Groundsman (\$32,853) has already been realized in the 1978-79 Budget.
3. Routine administrative responsibilities should be assigned to the Parks Development Coordinator position.



DEPARTMENT COMMENT

The Department filled the vacant Assistant Parks Superintendent position effective September 1, 1978.

## EXISTING PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION



\*The underlined areas are workbases. One Senior Parks Groundsman or Parks Groundsman III is assigned to each workbase and also is responsible for the other areas listed immediately after the workbase.



EXHIBIT I-B

EXISTING PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

DIRECTOR OF  
PARKS AND RECREATION

Direct department business through Parks  
Superintendent and Parks Development  
Coordinator  
Attend Board of Supervisors meetings  
Review budget requests  
Attend meetings with other departments  
and agencies  
Prepare Board of Supervisors agenda items  
Visual review of park facilities

PARKS DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

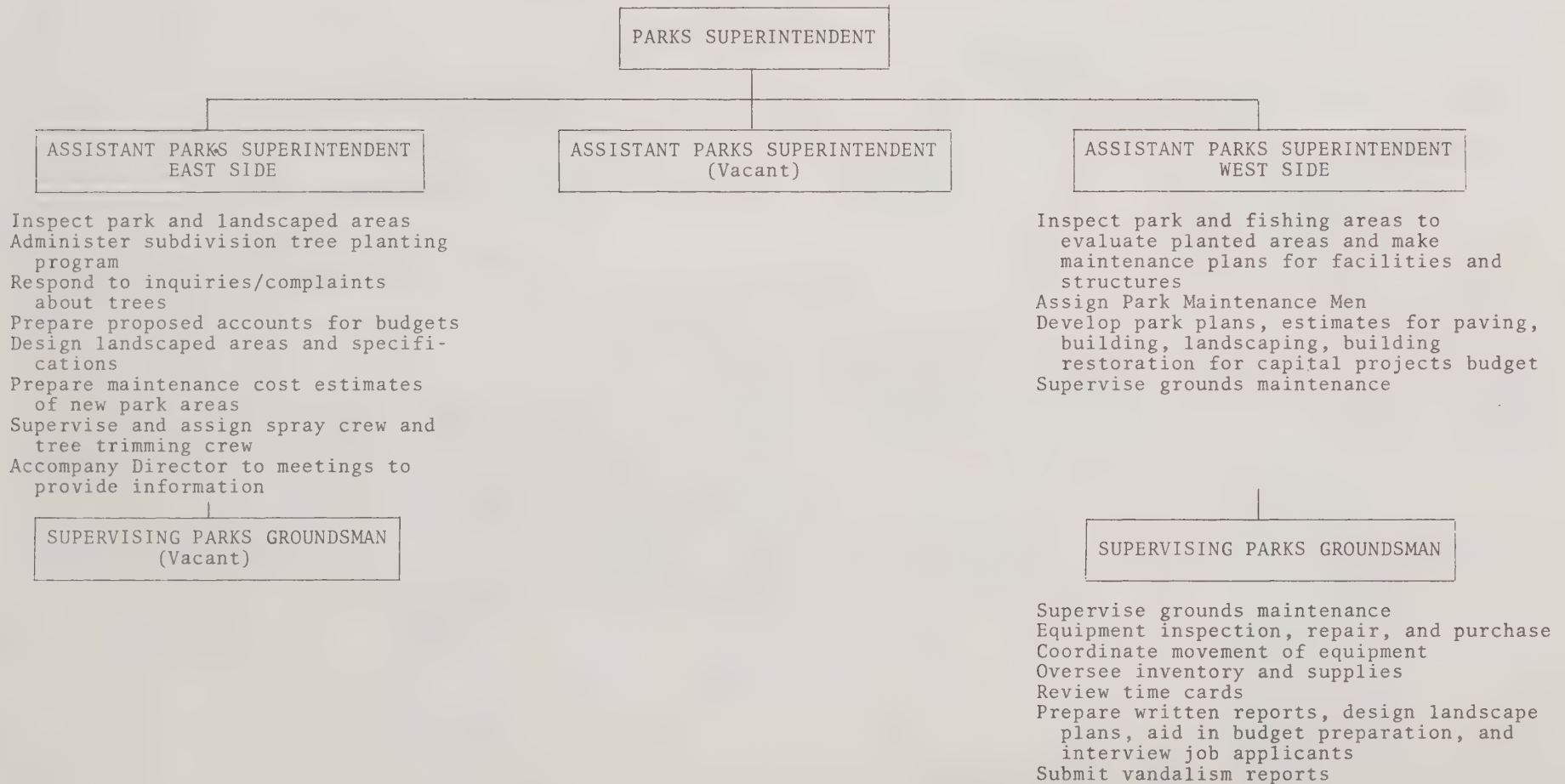
Coordinate park development with other  
government agencies  
Develop plans for current park  
facilities and new park development  
Coordinate budget preparation and  
monitor budget expenditures  
Administer grants, agreements with  
concessionaires and agreements on  
use of undeveloped park lands  
Coordinate and administer special work  
programs  
May represent department at meetings

PARKS SUPERINTENDENT

Direct park maintenance operations  
Assist in preparation and administration  
of budget  
Inspect park maintenance areas and new  
construction  
Administer personnel matters such as  
advancements and disciplinary actions  
Recommend final hiring and termination  
of personnel  
Review new project design and development  
Monitor professional service contracts  
Hold monthly supervisor staff meetings  
May represent department at meetings  
Respond to complaints/inquiries from  
general public about school field trips  
and use of facilities for non-profit  
groups

## EXHIBIT I-C

## EXISTING PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION



## EXHIBIT II-A

### NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ORGANIZATION CHANGES

The organization depicted in Exhibits II-B through II-D shows the proposed redistribution of management responsibilities and restructuring of the organization. This is designed to provide a more manageable and complete distribution of duties, provide better accountability and control and improve communications.

The Director would assume a more active role in the planning, organizing and controlling of operations of the Department. This would include greater involvement in budget preparation and monitoring, reviewing park development plans, reviewing the development and modification of work plans and monitoring reports or performance and control measures such as equipment usage. The Department Head could concentrate on ensuring that the efforts of management personnel are coordinated and directed toward carrying out the Department's mission in the most efficient and effective manner.

The Parks Development Coordinator's duties would be broadened to relieve the Parks Superintendent of some routine tasks. This position would perform most routine administrative tasks such as personnel related functions, administering agreements with concessionaires and private vendors, coordinating budget preparation, supervising the Account Clerk II position, routine administrative and personnel matters including analyzing expenditure trends, and ensuring adequate purchasing and personnel records are generated and maintained. Preferably these duties would be performed by an Administrative Services Assistant I/II. But because of financial constraints, we recommend they be assigned to the current Parks Development Coordinator. He should be able to absorb these additional administrative duties due to not having the necessary financial resources to operate and maintain additional park development. See Exhibit II-C.

The Parks Superintendent would have more time for developing and monitoring adherence to maintenance standards and work plans for each area, monitoring budget expenditures, supervising the Assistant Parks Superintendents, and generally ensuring the effectiveness of parks maintenance operations.

In order to more specifically assign responsibilities, enhance communications between line positions, and provide a more manageable span of control, the third Assistant Parks Superintendent position would be filled and the duties of



the two Assistant Parks Superintendents and Supervising Parks Groundsman would be divided among three Assistant Parks Superintendents. This reassignment would allow each position to have a more manageable share of grounds maintenance responsibilities, and would permit removal of the Supervising Parks Groundsman level as an extra management layer between the Parks Superintendent and the leadman positions of Senior Parks Groundsman. The third Assistant Parks Superintendent position is currently budgeted, but has been unfilled due to the need to review the Department's current organization. The proposed assignment of duties for the three Assistant Parks Superintendents is based upon the complexity of functions, the number of functions, and the span of control.

The two Supervising Parks Groundsman positions to be deleted are currently a duplicative management level that results in insufficient communication through the organization and confusion between the Assistant Parks Superintendent and the Supervising Parks Groundsman over responsibility for assigned duties. Senior Parks Groundsmen are also placed in the position of reporting to more than one superior which can result in conflicting directions and priorities.

The Parks Groundsman II position to be deleted presently repairs and transports equipment and reports to a Senior Parks Groundsman. The Senior Parks Groundsman also maintains inventory records. The functions of these two positions can be adequately performed by one position with a title more descriptive of the duties actually being performed, such as Storeroom Supervisor. The proposed organization shows a Storeroom Supervisor position performing these routine functions and reporting directly to the Assistant Parks Superintendent.

The span of control for the Senior Parks Groundsmen is based upon the assignment of two to six Parks Groundsmen (including extra-help) to each Senior Parks Groundsman. The actual number may vary depending on the size of the parks, distance between parks, the amount of usage of the parks, and the number of extra-help personnel assigned to an area.

## PROPOSED PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

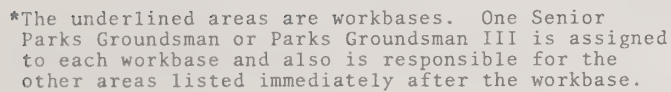


EXHIBIT II-C

PROPOSED PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

23

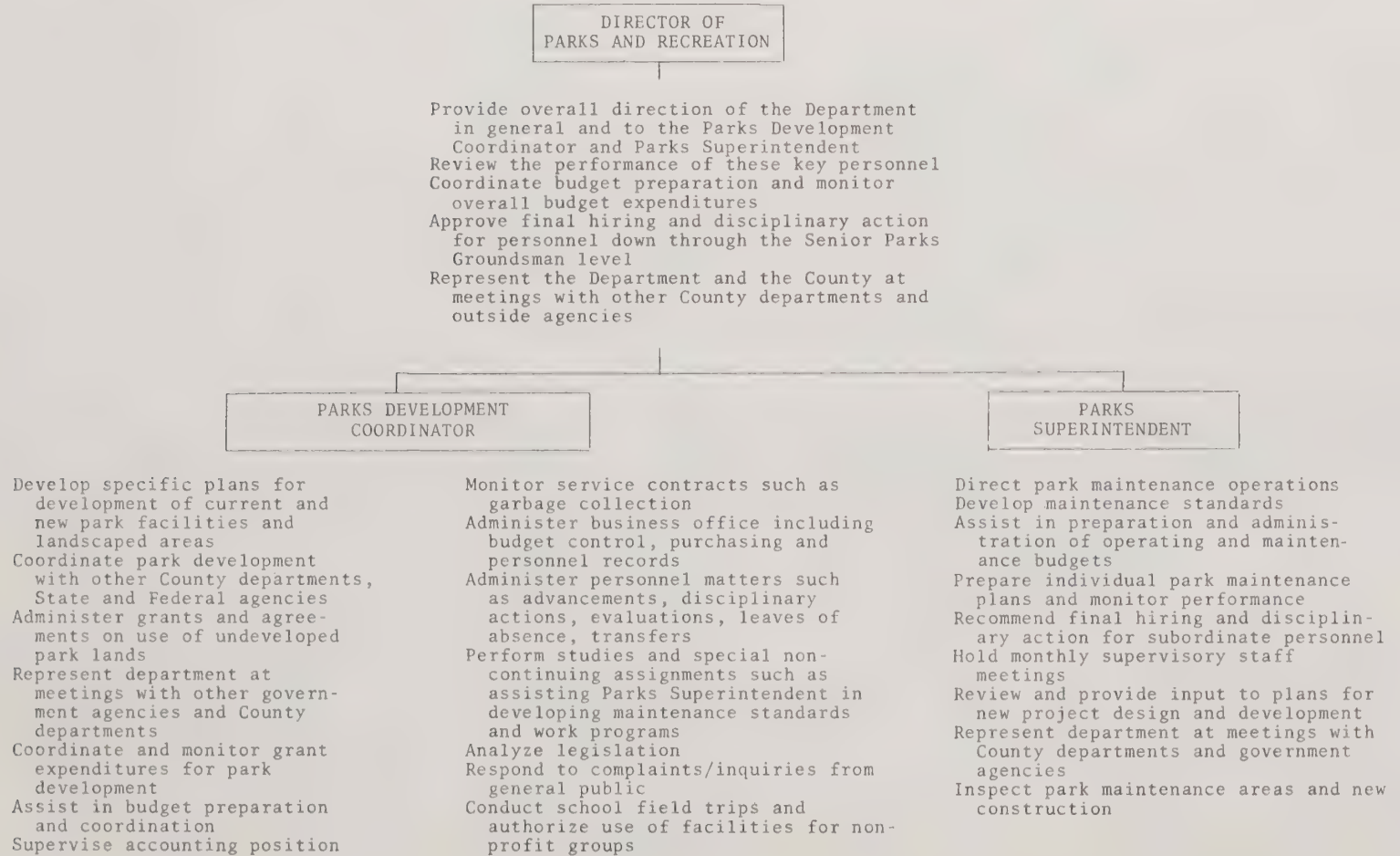




EXHIBIT II-D

PROPOSED PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

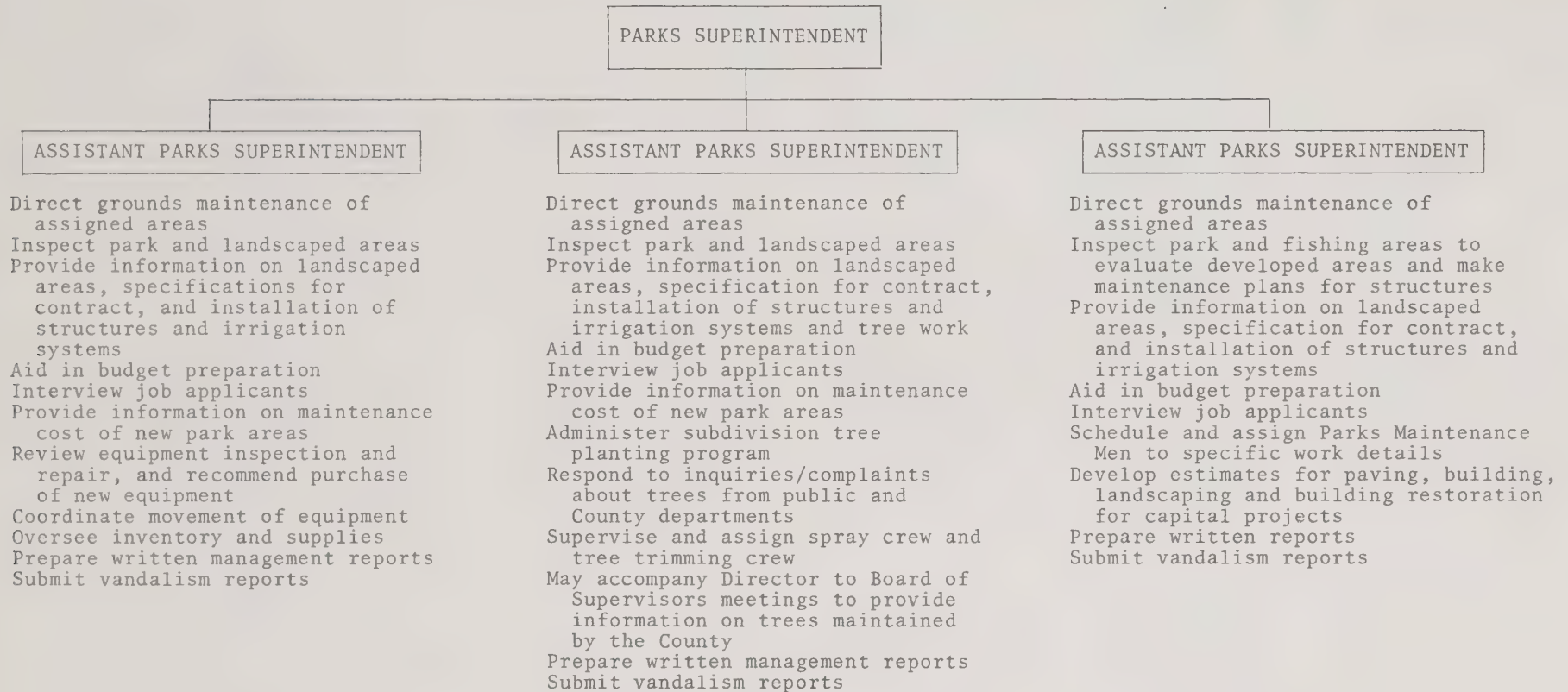


EXHIBIT III

PROPOSED REORGANIZATION OF PARKS AND  
RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Position Additions and Deletions

Deleted Positions

<u>Positions</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Total</u>
2	Supervising Parks Groundsman	\$27,378	
1	Senior Parks Groundsman	13,926	
1	Parks Groundsman II	10,192	
	Fringe Benefits	10,299	
<hr/> 4	Total Deletions		\$61,795

New Positions

<u>Positions</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Total</u>
1	Storeroom Supervisor	\$11,388	
	Fringe Benefits	2,278	
<hr/> 1	Total Additions		\$13,666
 <hr/> 3	Net Savings		\$48,129

The Storeroom Supervisor position is subject to classification review by the Personnel Management Division.

## SECTION II. STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

### 2. SEASONAL WORKLOAD

#### FINDING SUMMARY

The Department should be able to perform its maintenance duties at less cost with fewer year-round permanent grounds maintenance personnel. In order to meet the increased seasonal workload from April through September, the Department should rely more heavily on extra-help employees.

#### STATEMENT OF CONDITION

Currently, the park areas are primarily staffed by permanent full-time year-round personnel. The Department has also felt the need for additional extra-help personnel in the summer months. During the spring and summer seasons of April through September, additional extra-help positions are filled, varying during the last three years from a maximum of 12 to 41 positions depending upon available funding.

The actual number of extra-help personnel employed for each month during the April through September period varies. The Department starts hiring some extra-help employees in April and gradually increases the number, reaching the maximum number of allocated positions during June through August. The number of extra-help employees are then reduced in September. During 1977, up to 12 General Fund extra-help positions were filled during this time. Generally, the Department has been able to attract competent and reliable personnel for short-term employment and respond to peak workload demands.

These positions are allocated to the park areas based upon management experience in recognizing areas with highest usage and maintenance needs. During the summer months, higher usage results in more time being spent collecting campground fees, watering lawns and trees, mowing turfing areas, collecting litter and emptying garbage receptacles. Since the parks receive the greatest use on Saturdays and Sundays, the first part of the following week is the busiest for most parks personnel who must collect litter and empty garbage receptacles after heavy weekend use. Also, lawn care duties must be completed that cannot be performed on weekends because of the high visitor usage.



During the winter months, the day-to-day workload is much less intense, and annual maintenance or improvement tasks are performed such as planting trees or cleaning accumulated sand from sprinkler systems. This low level of activity was confirmed by our observation of park areas during this study and is typical of the winter months in most years when it has been historically foggy, wet and cold outdoors. The need for grounds maintenance is at a low level in the winter because of low park usage and the minimal amount of care necessary to maintain most park areas since major tasks such as lawn mowing, edging, and watering and other tasks such as litter and garbage pick-up are at greatly reduced levels.

Because our review was conducted during the winter months, we did not have the opportunity to actually observe park maintenance operations during the summer and could not draw any conclusions on the appropriateness of summer staffing levels.

Because specific standards and work plans have not been developed, staffing requirements cannot be closely calculated. For purposes of this finding, we relied on our visual observations of the number of staff that were idle or engaged in unproductive work during our touring of facilities in December, 1977. This is a reasonable means of determining that over-staffing exists as long as "the job" is getting done as presently defined by the Department's informal standards.

During the 1976-77 fiscal year, approximately 48,600 productive person-hours were worked by 54 permanent Parks Groundsmen I through Senior Parks Groundsmen during the slower season of October through March. Approximately the same number of productive person-hours were worked by permanent positions in the spring and summer months of July through September, 1976, and April through June, 1977. Also, approximately 12,000 more person-hours were worked by extra-help employees during the same spring and summer seasons.

For each permanent grounds maintenance position filled at the Parks Groundsman II level on a year-round basis, the total cost is approximately \$13,380 for salary (\$11,150) and fringe benefits (\$2,230). At the Parks Groundsman III level, the annual cost is \$15,380 for salary (\$12,820) and fringe benefits (\$2,560). As an alternative to each year-round position not needed during the low workload season, an extra-help position filled continuously for six months during the spring and summer would cost \$5,635 for salary (\$3,550), Social Security (\$215), and unemployment insurance benefits (maximum of \$1,870).

#### CRITERIA

Department management should define the standards and work program for its supervisors and work crews to minimize indecision, idle time of grounds maintenance personnel

between assignments, and unnecessary work activities. This will also improve management's capacity to direct and control the operations of the Department.

Parks Department maintenance work force levels should be adjusted with the fluctuations of seasonal workload demands.

Seasonal personnel should be utilized to augment regular staff during the busier summer season.

Year-round full-time staffing should be kept to the minimum level required to meet winter workload and provide leadership to spring and summer seasonal help.

#### EFFECT

The Parks and Recreation Department incurs unnecessary costs by relying too heavily on permanent full-time employees instead of utilizing a smaller core of permanent full-time employees and hiring extra-help personnel to expand the work force during the busier season of April through September.

#### CAUSE

The Department has felt that it must primarily rely on permanent full-time personnel to adequately maintain parks and landscaped areas.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

4. The appropriate year-round staffing level of permanent grounds maintenance personnel should be that number necessary to meet the lowest seasonal workload level and vacation coverage.
5. The Department and County Administrative Office should work together to determine the level of permanent position staffing needed to maintain winter level maintenance standards.
6. As a temporary measure, permanent full-time grounds maintenance positions should be frozen as they become vacant and only be filled with extra-help personnel for the summer workload peak. This policy should remain in effect until the Department and the County Administrative Office develop a methodology for calculating the appropriate year-round staffing level of permanent grounds maintenance positions.

### 3. USE OF ANNUAL LEAVE TIME FOR VACATIONS

#### FINDING SUMMARY

The Department should modify its current vacation policy to ensure the maximum number of employees are available during the busy summer months.

#### STATEMENT OF CONDITION

Most park areas receive their greatest use during the summer months. This is also the time when the Department utilizes most of its extra-help personnel in response to the greater number of park visitors and higher plant growth rates. The finding on "Seasonal Workload" indicates that 12 regular extra-help positions were funded during the 1977 summer season. These positions cost approximately \$48,000 in extra-help funds. This is equivalent to approximately 12,000 person-hours or six full-time equivalent (FTE) positions.

Currently, employees of the Department submit requests for vacation by the first of March during each calendar year. Vacation dates are approved based upon the seniority of employees. An employee may normally take vacation time at any time of the year. However, usually only one employee is allowed to take vacation at any one time from each work base. The length of the vacation is not generally modified or restricted by management.

A review of vacation use during the 1977 calendar year indicated that 4,496 person-hours of vacation were taken from April through September by Parks Groundsmen I through Senior Parks Groundsmen. This is equal to 2.16 FTE positions. Approximately one-half of the permanent employees in these classifications took one week or more of vacation during this time and accounted for approximately 56% of vacation time taken by these grounds maintenance staff the entire year.

#### CRITERIA

To avoid unnecessary costs, the use of annual leave time for vacation purposes should be scheduled when the Department workload is at a minimum, and extra-help employees are not being used. This would be approximately during the period of October through March of each year (six months).

#### EFFECT

The Department relies more heavily than necessary on extra-help personnel during the summer months because permanent



employees go on vacation. We estimate the financial impact of this practice is \$28,145 for 4,496 person-hours each year.

#### CAUSE

Vacations have traditionally been taken throughout the year and the Department has not felt financially constrained to reduce the practice. This policy has had a positive effect on employee morale, and is easily administered with the available pool of extra-help personnel to fill in behind vacationing permanent staff.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

7. The Department should advise new employees that vacations will normally be taken only during the slower winter months when extra-help employees are not being utilized.
8. The Department should promulgate a vacation policy that encourages all employees to take winter vacations, and discourages summer vacations. This vacation policy should only allow summer vacations if a hardship would be created for an employee.

#### DEPARTMENT COMMENT

A revised policy for employees eligible for summer vacations has been put into effect for summer vacations in 1979.



### SECTION III. MAINTENANCE STANDARDS AND DEPLOYMENT OF RESOURCES

#### 4. STANDARDS OF SERVICE

##### FINDING SUMMARY

Standards for the level of maintenance of each landscaped or park area for which the Parks and Recreation Department is responsible should be specifically defined and available to the maintenance personnel who are responsible for meeting them.

##### STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The Parks and Recreation Department has jurisdiction over approximately 1998 acres. Of this area, 921 acres are maintained at 14 parks, 5 fishing access areas, 2 boat launching ramps, 6.4 miles of medians, and 4 scenic drives. Landscaped areas are also maintained at Courthouse Park, the Kings Canyon Complex, Maintenance Yard, John Ashjian Complex (Juvenile Hall), Liberty Cemetery, 11 service areas and 5 smaller County facilities such as branch libraries and justice courts. The remaining land, 1077 acres, is not developed and requires only minimal maintenance.

Maintenance standards define the appearance, safety, and botanical health conditions expected for each facility. Standards for the maintenance of park and landscaped areas are not currently defined by the Department in writing, but consist primarily of the visual impression being one of a neat and orderly appearance. Parks Groundsmen perform their maintenance duties based upon past practices and the day-to-day work direction of Senior Parks Groundsmen. Each Senior Parks Groundsman is responsible for the appearance of an assigned area and establishing routine work assignments for personnel assigned to the area. Frequent field surveys by Supervising Parks Groundsmen and higher management personnel are conducted to detect deficiencies in appearance and redirect priorities.

Maintenance standards are generally higher at the Courthouse and Valley Medical Center because of the high level of public use on a year-round basis. Also, many smaller lawn areas and numerous flower beds at these sites require year-



round care. These areas have undergone major recent modifications because of parking lot revisions and building remodeling.

Park areas require varying types of maintenance, depending on the time of year. From approximately April through September, the park areas receive heavy usage and require frequent lawn cutting and watering. Trash collection and campground fee collection tasks are also substantially increased during this time. The appearance of picnic and campground areas is expected to be neat, but actual standards for their maintenance are determined at each park location by the Senior Parks Groundsman.

Undeveloped park land is generally leased out for grazing and may require occasional trash removal or weed control, particularly where the land borders roads or developed park areas. These areas are essentially maintained in their natural state.

Maintenance of service areas, such as lawns at flood control basins, varies. Some areas require only semi-annual maintenance of noncultivated areas, such as ponding basins. Other areas require regular lawn cutting, litter pick-up, and sprinkler repair. These areas generally receive minimal public use and also need more service in the summer months because of lawn mowing and watering.

## CRITERIA

Standards are necessary to ensure that landscaped areas are adequately, yet not excessively, maintained. Specific written standards of maintenance describing what areas are to be maintained, and condition parameters to be permitted such as upper and lower limits of grass height at varying times of year, should be established and utilized by department personnel at all areas maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department. This will promote the most efficient and effective utilization of available department resources by defining workload to help determine how to allocate available labor and equipment resources to each area at varying times of the year.

The standards developed by the Department should be in writing and initially reflect current informal standards. Any later proposed rise in those standards that cannot be absorbed within existing resources should be presented as a budget request to increase service level. These requests should be evaluated by the County Administrative Office and Board of Supervisors in light of the results and benefits to be achieved, and the capability of the County's overall financial situation to accomplish them. Any proposed reduction in budgeted resources due to policy or financial

constraints should be considered in terms of possible reductions in standards the Department can be expected to sustain.

"Maintenance standards" as we are using the term in this report is not synonymous with staffing standards. The former refers to level of service types of objectives. Staffing standards refer to the amount of personnel needed to accomplish a measured amount of work (engineered or historical). Development of maintenance standards does not require eventual development of engineered staffing standards to accomplish the purposes for which we propose the former in this finding. In fact, engineered staffing standards are not always necessary or desirable to determine staffing requirements since negotiated methods can be nearly as accurate, less costly, and more adaptable to changing conditions.

### EFFECT

There are differences of understanding between Senior Parks Groundsmen and management personnel as to "maintenance standards," resulting in various levels of park and landscape maintenance.

Because specific written standards have not been prepared, departments or agencies served by the Parks and Recreation Department may not know what landscape condition will be maintained.

### CAUSE

The Department has felt that the present informal standards are adequate. This is because they have been able in the past to maintain the park and landscaped areas in an attractive state, yet they have also felt more maintenance work and resources are needed to achieve the standards they feel are appropriate.

A general absence of formal planning in the Department, including specific plans for the development of existing park and landscaped areas, makes preparation of maintenance standards difficult.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

9. The Department should establish written maintenance standards for the condition of each area it is to maintain, that are adjustable to meet seasonal needs. Initial written standards should reflect those currently being met with existing

resources so that future changes in standards can be correlated with changes in staffing levels or productivity variables.

10. These standards should be used by the Department to internally allocate resources and provide direction and objectives for maintenance personnel. The Department's standards should be regarded by the County Administrative Office as a barometer of the effect of proposed changes in staffing levels or other resources.
11. The Department should periodically review standards to ensure they are economically feasible.

## 5. WORK PROGRAMMING

### FINDING SUMMARY

Assignment of regularly recurring work performed by grounds maintenance personnel, spray and tree trimming crews, and Parks Maintenance Men should be scheduled based on a planned maintenance program. This program should include interval schedules and time standards to complete tasks. More emphasis should be placed on completing scheduled maintenance duties assigned to Parks Maintenance Men and special work crews. Less time should have to be devoted to reacting to work requests submitted by Senior Parks Groundsmen to Assistant Parks Superintendents who then make work assignments.

### STATEMENT OF CONDITION

Assignment of work to Parks Groundsmen I through Parks Groundsmen III is done on a day-to-day basis by Senior Parks Groundsmen who are assigned responsibility to maintain the grounds of each park or landscaped area. A formalized routine work program of specific, scheduled activities for particular landscaped areas are not utilized. Feedback and control reports of actual hours spent on grounds maintenance tasks, such as lawnmowing, watering, or minor sprinkler repairs are not kept.

Certain functions are performed by specialized crews or personnel for all park and landscaped areas. These include a tree crew, weed spraying crew, and seven Parks Maintenance Men.



The tree crew consists of three Parks Groundsmen, a Tree Trimmer, and a Senior Tree Trimmer. This crew is responsible for trimming trees in park areas, landscaped areas and County maintained medians and scenic drive right-of-ways. Most work orders are on a request basis from parks personnel or the public. Tree trimming activities therefore are not scheduled very far in advance, such as several months at a time, to obtain maximum productivity through minimum travel and set up time. Trees are maintained primarily on a complaint basis and not for health or aesthetic reasons. The number of trees in parks under County jurisdiction needing regular maintenance is not known, though a count is available of trees on scenic drives.

The spray crew consists of three Parks Groundsmen. Scheduling the spray crew is not based upon an established plan, but is performed upon the request of Senior Parks Groundsmen. During the summer months, spraying must be coordinated with the watering schedules of park and landscaped areas.

Parks Maintenance Men are responsible for repair and maintenance of mechanical and structural facilities. They either report directly to a park or landscaped area or to the parks headquarters at Kearney Park to receive daily assignments. Most work assignments are done on a request basis from Senior Parks Groundsmen. Some maintenance is also done on an annual basis, such as painting of park structures. Scheduling is informal rather than based upon a specific maintenance plan. Maintenance work orders are utilized to record the type of job, location and estimated time for completion of the work. The actual number of hours of labor, cost and quantity of materials are not always indicated on the work order.

## CRITERIA

A routine maintenance program for mechanical and structural facilities and grounds maintenance for park and landscaped areas should be utilized. It should specify standard activities and include interval schedules showing the frequency of maintenance for particular pieces of equipment, structures and grounds maintenance areas. A scheduled program for weed spraying and tree trimming should also be utilized.

Estimated standard hours for completion of a repair or maintenance function, including grounds maintenance and tree trimming, and actual hours spent, should be recorded on work orders. Standard hours should be compared to actual to detect variations. Standards are normal amounts of time that should be spent on a project. This type of comparison

will give management an indication of those activities that should be reviewed to ensure productivity is acceptable and to maintain cost control.

Accurate and complete records of materials used for repairs and maintenance, including grounds maintenance, should be maintained for each project or work location and reviewed by the Assistant Parks Superintendents to detect any possible shrinkage of materials inventory.

### EFFECT

Idle time between jobs and the time spent on each job is not minimized because of the lack of control efforts and systematic scheduling of recurring and programable work assignments.

Specialized crews, such as the tree crew, are underutilized and not assigned work in a manner that effectively utilizes available productive person-hours.

Excessive mechanical, structural facility, and grounds maintenance costs for particular areas cannot be readily identified. This results in minimal management control over these costs.

### CAUSE

The current methods of assigning and controlling special work crew functions such as the tree crew, Parks Maintenance Men assignments, and grounds maintenance work, is the result of management's approach of reacting to day-to-day problems and maintenance needs. There has been little attention devoted to planning and programming regular, recurring work assignments which we estimate would make up most of the Department's total maintenance workload.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

12. A planned maintenance work program should be developed which includes task identification and interval scheduling for each park and landscaped area. A program for regular weed spraying and tree trimming should also be implemented. A tree trimming program should include identifying the number of trees by variety, age, and location, and then determining the desirable frequency of trimming for health, safety, and aesthetic reasons.

13. Time standards for the completion of tasks should be developed and employed for the tree crew, spray crew, Parks Maintenance Men and Parks Groundsmen against which to assess operating efficiency on a continuing basis.
14. Records and statistics on repairs and maintenance should be maintained for each park and landscaped area and reviewed by management.
15. Work order forms should be completely filled out and include actual hours of labor expended and quantities of material used for repairs and maintenance.

## 6. ASSIGNMENT OF NEW PARK AND LANDSCAPED AREAS

### FINDING SUMMARY

Though difficult to determine, it appears the Department's operations and level of maintenance have not been adversely affected by the addition of park and landscaped areas to their maintenance responsibilities in recent years. Maintenance standards and facility work plans would better enable the Department to measure workload and estimate resources needed to accomplish maintenance functions of existing and additional park and landscaped areas.

### STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The Parks and Recreation Department has been assigned several new areas to maintain during the last five years (see Exhibit IV). Liberty Cemetery was added in 1973 and three personnel were transferred at that time from the Veterans' Service Office. The staffing ratio there for the 13 acres is one position per 4.3 acres. Most of the other areas were acquired from the Public Works Department in 1974. When these areas were transferred, one supervisory position and 10 grounds maintenance positions assigned to the Public Works Department were also reassigned to the Parks and Recreation Department. These areas total 85.81 acres which computes to one position per 8.6 acres. It was felt that maintenance of these areas was a function more closely related to the Parks and Recreation Department and that consolidating landscape maintenance would result in more efficient use of resources.



Three new parks have been developed and opened during the last four years. These include Choinumni Park with 170 acres (12 acres turfed and developed and 118 acres maintained for litter control, weed control, and tree trimming), Laton-Kingston Park with 102 acres (22 acres turfed and developed and 60 acres maintained for litter control, weed control, and tree trimming), and Skaggs Bridge Park with all 15 acres turfed and developed. Five new positions were added to the Department when these areas were opened. Also, two to six extra-help positions (regular and CETA) have been assigned to the Choinumni Park during the summer months. The other two parks have not utilized extra-help personnel.

Additional maintained areas added during the last four years have increased the staffing ratio per acre maintained. In 1974-75, the staffing ratio was 12.25 acres (766 total acres) of turfed and developed park areas per budgeted full-time equivalent (FTE) position of Parks Groundsman I through Senior Parks Groundsman (50 total permanent positions, 12.5 extra-help and CETA positions). Since the 1974-75 fiscal year, a total of 155 maintained acres, four new permanent positions, and 2.3 extra-help FTE positions have been assigned to the Department. These new positions provided a staffing ratio of one FTE position per 24.6 acres of new turfed and developed areas. The current ratio for the entire department's 921 turfed and developed acres is 13.4 acres per budgeted FTE position of Parks Groundsman II through Senior Parks Groundsman (54 total permanent positions and 14.8 extra-help and CETA positions).

Our visual inspections of park and landscaped areas and interviews with department staff did not reveal any visible adverse impact on the Department's operations as a result of workload additions of these new areas.

## CRITERIA

Proposed landscaped areas should be reviewed for their potential impact on the workload of the current and proposed grounds maintenance work force. This evaluation should assess the impact of new facilities and staff on the ability of the Department to carry-out its continuing landscape maintenance responsibilities.

Maintenance standards and work programs should be used in showing the effect of additional areas on the overall performance of the Department.

## EFFECT

The effect of additional areas being assigned to the Department is difficult to anticipate for budget purposes. Without

clearly defined maintenance standards from which to design facility work plans, the Parks and Recreation Department budget may have been increased more than necessary to meet new facility workload increases. Since existing facilities continue to meet visual standards and overall ratios of maintenance staff to acres maintained is approximately the same, it is likely the budget has grown sufficiently to accommodate maintenance of new facilities.

### CAUSE

Factors such as weather, types of plants used in planter areas, and mechanization, are as significant as acreage in determining grounds maintenance workload. Variations in any of these factors can offset one another and not affect the Department's ability to meet appearance or level of care standards.

Facility landscape plans and maintenance standards that are specific and identify the minimum necessary work activity level to meet them have not been developed by the Department. This limits any opportunity to measure the impact of variations in the ratio between acreage and maintenance personnel.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

16. As in the evaluation of the County's financial commitment to develop and operate each proposed new facility, maintenance and operating budget decisions should be based on landscape plans, specific maintenance standards, and work plans for each new facility in order to accurately anticipate the resources needed to maintain an area.
17. Operating budget requirements for existing facilities should also be periodically re-evaluated based upon landscape plans, maintenance standards, and work plans to evaluate the Department's continuing ability to maintain facilities at acceptable levels. These tools can also be used to evaluate the Department's existing work force capacity to absorb new workload increases from added facilities.

# EXHIBIT IV

## Areas Assigned for Maintenance by the Parks and Recreation Department 1973-1978

(Excluding Parks)

<u>Area</u>	<u>Year Acquired</u>	<u>Size</u>
<u>Courthouse</u>		
Courthouse Park	1974	17 acres
Elections - Planters/Parking	1974	.05 acres
Environmental Health - Planters/Parking	1974	.05 acres
Schools Building - Lawn/Planter	1974	.25 acre
Main Library	1974	1 acre
<u>John Ashjian Complex (Juvenile Hall)</u>		
Youth Center/Wakefield School	1974	9 acres
Computer Services	1974	2 acres
Probation	1978	2 acres
Ball Diamond/Soccer Field	1974	3 acres
Curb Strip - Ninth Street	1974	.25 acre
<u>Kings Canyon Road</u>		
Complex	1974	33.5 acres
Parking Lot/Landscape Improvements	1976	No change
<u>County Maintenance Yard</u>		
Garage	1974	2 acres
Weights and Measures	1975	.33 acre
Farm and Home Advisor	1974	.33 acre
Agriculture Commissioner	1974	.33 acre
Purchasing Warehouse	1978	.33 acre
<u>Service Areas (Improvement Districts)</u>		
Tenaya Park	1974	2.5 acres
Bullard Industrial Park	1974	2.5 acres
El Capitan (Basin)	1974	1 acre
Easton (Basin)	1974	1.25 acres
Belmont Manor (Basin)	1974	1 acre
Wildwood Island	1974	1 acre
Service Area 24 (Basin)	1974	.05 acre
Tarpey Diverter/Planter	1974	10' x 40'
Sunnyside #3	1974	1 acre
Sunnywood #3	1974	1 acre
West Fresno Library	1974	.25 acre
Selma Library	1978	.25 acre
Clovis Justice Court (Strip)	1974	10' x 50'
Beth Ramacher School	1974	5 acres
Liberty Cemetery	1973	13 acres
Auberry Justice Court	1974	.25 acre
Meadow Lakes	1974	.25 acre
Medians and Parking Strips	1975	32 acres (8 miles)
Van Ness Extension	1977	14 acres (3.5 miles)
TOTAL ACRES BY YEAR: <u>1973</u> <u>1974</u> <u>1975</u> <u>1976</u> <u>1977</u> <u>1978</u>		
13    85.81    32.33    0    14    2.58		



## 7. BUDGETING AND DEPLOYMENT OF RESOURCES

### FINDING SUMMARY

Without specific standards for maintenance of park and landscaped areas, it is difficult to determine if current practices of deploying available personnel and equipment provide sufficient or excessive resources to maintain individual park and landscaped areas. With specific standards, deployment could be more precise and responsive to actual needs of the area maintained.

### STATEMENT OF CONDITION

Assignment of personnel is based upon several considerations. Usually, the number of personnel assigned to a specific area is based upon the past ability of assigned personnel to maintain the area in an acceptable manner. If an area is not being maintained at an acceptable level and management feels it is the result of workload exceeding the capacity of the assigned employees, additional personnel may be shifted from other areas. The number of transfers vary depending also on the number of vacancies and the amount of use various areas receive.

Other criteria for personnel assignment include the size, type, and usage of an area. The size of park and landscaped areas vary considerably resulting in varying maintenance needs. Open, turfed park areas generally require less time per acre than small landscaped areas such as Valley Medical Center or Courthouse Park where there are numerous small lawns and landscaped sections which require more time and generally have a higher maintenance standard. The usage of park and landscaped areas varies considerably depending on location and time of year. The summer months are the busiest for park and campground areas resulting in the need for additional personnel to collect camping fees, remove refuse and maintain landscaped areas.

Another main consideration for assignment of personnel and equipment is the distance between areas. Parks and landscaped areas in close proximity to each other are normally served by the same personnel. Personnel report to a designated area, called a work base, and then are assigned tasks on a daily basis at the areas adjacent to the work base. Distances between areas served by a work base are generally greater on the West side (area generally west of Highway 99), than the East side areas (area generally east of Highway 99), thus necessitating greater driving time for park personnel on the West side to service assigned areas.

The equipment complement for each area is based mainly on the type and size of the area being serviced and the desired level of appearance. Standard complements of basic equipment such as lawn mowers and edgers, change infrequently. Larger specialized pieces such as a backhoe or disc that are not used on a continuous basis, are rotated between work areas.

Budget requests for new positions are submitted to the County Administrative Office by the Department on a standard form. This form indicates the job title, number of positions, total salary cost, and the number of pay periods the position(s) is needed. An area is also provided on the form indicating the justification for the position such as to maintain a new park or landscaped area. The last section on the form describes the proposed duties of the position. For Parks Groundsman personnel, proposed duties would include general grounds maintenance, irrigation, litter clean-up, and labor as required.

### CRITERIA

Personnel and equipment should be assigned to park and landscaped areas based upon specific maintenance standards and work programs. Assignments should be adjusted in response to changes in standards or work programs at the various areas maintained by the Department.

Budgeting of positions and other resources for the Department can be based upon County Administrative Office or Board of Supervisors approved maintenance standards (service level) the Department is expected to sustain, and negotiated estimates of staffing necessary to perform the work plans the Department develops to meet those maintenance standards. This process does not require engineered staffing standards to translate work programs into staffing requirements, though this technique can be used. However, less formal or expensive methods which utilize specific work plans as a base can be nearly as accurate and more adaptable to changing maintenance standards or budget policy.

### EFFECT

The current method of informally evaluating workload and assigning resources makes it difficult for department management to know if available personnel and equipment are efficiently deployed.

Current techniques of developing the budget for the Parks and Recreation Department are not supported by sufficient information to consider important variables such as efficiency in deployment of resources or the effects of

changing maintenance standards, work techniques, landscape plans, seasonal workload fluctuations or department policies.

#### CAUSE

The Department has concentrated its management efforts and time on visiting park and landscape areas to compare the appearance, health of plants and trees, and safety of an area with informal standards of maintenance.

Documentation of Parks and Recreation Department staffing budget requests, because of the absence of written maintenance standards and work plans, has restricted the budget review process to relatively arbitrary evaluations and rough determinations of funding requirements.

#### RECOMMENDATION

18. Department management should utilize specific maintenance standards and work programs to more precisely determine the necessary amount of equipment and number of employees needed to maintain each park and landscaped area under its jurisdiction.





## SECTION IV. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

### 8. PLANNING FOR NEW PARK DEVELOPMENT

#### FINDING SUMMARY

Plans for new park development, including the Recreation and Parks Plan, should be reviewed to ensure they are appropriate to today's needs.

#### STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The current Recreation and Parks Plan, which is part of the County General Plan, was first adopted in 1963. It was amended in 1967 to include an additional 230 acres of land near Reedley as a potential area for park development. In 1975, the plan was again amended to include the Recreation Trails element. The current Recreation and Parks Plan was designed as a general guide to anticipate and meet park and recreation needs for the County. It was intended to be general and flexible and act as a basic outline of parks and recreation policy by indicating the most desirable general locations and sizes of park areas based upon driving distance from populations served, natural environment of trees and waterways, availability of existing park areas, and the need for new parks in proportion to populations served. It does not include development or operating costs of existing or proposed park areas.

The Recreation and Parks Plan defines the general type of facilities to be provided in various geographic areas called zones. Zone 1 recreation areas serve primarily a community or single urban area with facilities such as small city parks and playgrounds. The plan indicates that Zone 1 parks should be the responsibility of the immediate area or city served. The Recreation and Parks Plan recommends that the County's responsibility should be primarily to provide both natural and man-made recreation areas to serve Zone 2 needs of its residents. The recreation areas in Zone 2, as defined in the plan, ". . . are outside the urban areas but within an hour (40 miles) drive and accessible for one day (usually) weekend outings. The areas should have natural attractions for picnicing and camping. Its service is regional or areawide rather than being aimed at a community or single urban area."

The same plan recommends the County's major emphasis, at least from 1963-1973, should be toward land acquisition to meet the present and future demand for parks. It also recommends that parks be established for each of three main recreation service areas. These areas are designated as the Eastside Valley, Northwest Valley, and the Southwest Valley.

The Eastside Valley area is generally the area east of the Fresno Slough which is a natural division of the San Joaquin Valley. It recommends the acquisition of 1,460 acres for parks, primarily along the Kings River south of Avocado Lake, be acquired by 1980. Approximately 1,166 acres have been acquired of which 329 acres have been developed as turf or maintained for litter control.

For the Northwest Valley area, north of Mt. Whitney Avenue and west of the Fresno Slough, 100 acres were recommended to be acquired by 1980 and 40 acres were to be developed by 1968. Presently, 85 acres have been acquired, 25 are turfed and 60 acres are maintained for litter control.

The Southwest Valley area, south of Mt. Whitney Avenue and west of the Fresno Slough, was projected as needing a 100 acre park by 1980. Currently, 77 acres have been acquired, one acre is turfed and 29 acres are maintained for litter control.

Also, the plan recommended a scenic drive system and at least two 18-hole public golf courses in the Eastside Valley for development by the County. A scenic drive element of the County General Plan has been adopted and includes areas along Kearney Boulevard, Golden State Boulevard, Van Ness Boulevard, and Shaw Avenue. The County currently does not operate or anticipate operating any golf facilities in the immediate future.

The plan recommended the acquisition of a total of 1,660 acres. The County has assumed maintenance responsibility, purchased or acquired rights to approximately 1,328 acres of park and landscaped areas since 1963. Of this amount, approximately 444 acres have been developed as turfed areas or areas actively maintained for litter and weed control.

There are several questionable assumptions in the current Recreation and Parks Plan. It does not consider Kearney Park or Roeding Park as available regional parks. Kearney and Roeding Parks were considered Zone 1 parks and are not considered as meeting Zone 2 needs. Woodward Park, which serves many of the needs similar to County regional parks, was not developed when this plan was written and, consequently, also is not considered as satisfying some Zone 2 park needs.

## CRITERIA

The Recreation and Parks Plan should specify the most desirable general locations and sizes of park areas based upon driving distance from populations served, natural environment of trees and waterways, development costs, operating costs, availability of existing park areas, and the need for new parks in proportion to populations served. This plan should also include guidelines for the type and quantity of facilities such as individual and group picnic sites, restrooms, swimming areas, tennis courts, parking areas, baseball diamonds, average miles of roads, and the general size for particular types of parks. Actual details of the type and number of facilities should be specified at a later planning stage of developing the site evaluation and master plan for each individual park area (where future park development is appropriate). The site evaluation or master plan of a park area is not a part of the Recreation and Parks Plan, but is a specific and more detailed plan for the ultimate development of a particular park site or undeveloped portion of an existing park.

The Recreation and Parks Plan should be reviewed on a regular basis, such as annually, for accuracy and relevancy to current needs and available resources. The plan should not project needs indefinitely into the future, but for a definite period of time, such as 10 years. The plan should not be considered usable if not updated by the time it has aged half the period of its projections.

All available park resources within regions of the County, regardless of the administering agency, should be considered in planning for future County park development to meet identified existing and future needs.

## EFFECT

The current Recreation and Parks Plan has served as a useful guide, and the goals of the plan developed in 1963 and since amended have been substantially achieved. However, the current Recreation and Parks Plan is outdated and probably unreliable as an assessment of services needed by future populations. It does not fully consider facilities available to meet those needs, and therefore, cannot be expected to adequately identify the number and type of additional facilities and locations needed. For instance, the assumption that the County should have sole responsibility for Zone 2 parks may not be valid today. Zone 2 needs have been partially met by other agencies providing similar facilities. Also, energy conservation, pollution, and convenience to users may dictate the development of parks closer to population centers instead of forcing users to drive considerable distances to parks.

## CAUSE

The Planning Department has recognized the need to update the current Recreation and Parks Plan. However, it has not been able to devote the necessary time to accomplish a complete revision because of the immediate need to make other revisions to the County General Plan in order to conform to State mandates.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

19. The Recreation and Parks Plan should be updated to ensure its relevancy to current and projected needs of the population the parks should serve. The general criteria outlined in this finding for updating the General Plan should be subject to refinement by the Parks and Recreation and Planning Departments as the plan is updated.
20. The location, size and type of existing facilities, such as picnicing and camping areas, should be considered in planning for future County park land acquisition and development.
21. Until the Recreation and Parks Plan is updated, it should not be used as a guide for future park acquisition or development.
22. A park master plan should be prepared by the Department and approved by the Board of Supervisors prior to developing project plans and proposals to build new parks or modify or expand existing park facilities.

## 9. SPECIFIC PARK ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

### FINDING SUMMARY

A more complete and systematic park acquisition and development decision-making process should be utilized for future park development. Evaluation of proposed land acquisition and development should include estimated development and operating costs.

Park acquisition and development funding is being actively sought by the Parks and Recreation Department. With the current condition of plans for individual parks, it is



difficult to determine whether development funds are being expended in the most effective manner to meet County park and recreation needs.

#### STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The current process for determining the type of development at new park areas or planning for site acquisition includes a review by affected County departments and other government agencies. The Planning Department normally does an environmental review of a proposed park site acquisition or development to determine whether an environmental impact report (E.I.R.) is needed. Agencies providing funding or directly affected by a proposed park site or a project, such as a campground along a river under the jurisdiction of the Department of Fish and Game also must be involved in planning and reviewing the appropriateness of the site or park project. Other agencies that may be affected would include cities, other counties and recreation districts.

The Parks and Recreation Commission is an advisory commission appointed by the Board of Supervisors. This commission reviews and recommends whether new park projects and recreational areas of County-wide significance are appropriate. It also acts in an advisory capacity to the Board of Supervisors on the maintenance and operation of recreation areas and facilities.

General guidelines for determining the type and number of facilities, such as parking spaces, size of picnic sites (group or single), and the amount and type of playground equipment are developed after park sites have been acquired. The Public Works and Health Departments determine guidelines for the type and number of restrooms.

New park areas generally consist of trees, turf and individual picnic areas. The Parks and Recreation Department staff advises the Public Works Department staff on the type and number of trees, general park layout, access and parking areas, known drainage problems, number of picnic sites, and the need to preserve unique or valuable natural assets such as geological features, trees, or waterways. The desirability of special features such as baseball diamonds (Lost Lake Park) or tennis courts (Kearney Park) are determined by the availability of funds, holding meetings with community groups to determine interests, and reviewing the availability of similar facilities in the general area. Final detailed plans are then developed by the Public Works Department.

A needs assessment study of the recreational needs of the State is currently being performed by a consultant for the State and is scheduled to be completed by July, 1979. It is therefore not available to the Department in planning the course of parks and recreation development in Fresno County.

Plans for the total development of existing park areas such as Lost Lake, Avocado Lake, and Kearney Park, have not been developed. Modifications or additions to these areas are done on a project basis rather than within the context of a facility master plan. These have included replacing or adding sprinklers and turfed areas, restrooms, roads, playground equipment, and camping and picnic facilities.

Until recently, development and operating cost estimates for each proposed land acquisition for parks purposes and development of existing areas have not been routinely included in studies and recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. Recent examples of proposals to the Board of Supervisors for park development that have included development and operating cost estimates are the McKinley Bike Path and Deutch Property.

The County has actively applied for funds from several sources for development of park areas. Most of these funding amounts are based upon the County's population or are set by an outside agency based upon a particular project. The Department must apply for the funds and describe the projects to be developed. Some funding sources may be spent over a period of several years. Recent major sources of funding include the 1974 Park Bond Act (\$504,000); 1976 Park Bond Act (\$508,498); Land and Water Conservation Act (\$106,000 ; National Historic Preservation Act (\$25,000); Transportation Development Act (\$45,800); Community Development Funds (\$242,000); and Revenue Sharing Funds (\$736,000). Of these total funds (\$2,644,472), approximately \$468,498 of the 1976 Park Bond Act and \$147,000 of the 1977 Urban Park Act have not yet been committed or designated for specific projects. Funding from all of the other sources since 1974, totalling \$2,028,974 has been committed or expended.

## CRITERIA

Decisions to develop parcels for park purposes should be based on their compatibility with the Recreation and Parks Plan, public input, cost, available funding for improvements, adequacy of existing park facilities, and the County's ability to support estimated operating and maintenance costs. These decisions should be based on a three stage planning process.

Updating and utilizing the Recreation and Parks Plan for park development is the first stage in the planning process for future park facilities. If the Recreation and Parks Plan indicates park development is appropriate in a particular geographic area based upon need, then the second planning stage should be a site evaluation of each particular site located in that area and available to the County for development. In this stage, each site is evaluated to determine whether it is suitable for meeting the requirements of the

Recreation and Parks Plan. Site evaluation plans should be more specific than the Recreation and Parks Plan, but not detailed enough to actually construct the facilities. The site evaluation of the final Board approved acquisition and/or development would become the master plan for a particular park location, upon policy approval by the Board of Supervisors.

The site evaluation should include the proposed site plan or drawing showing the layout of the facilities; describe in priority order or phases the amount of improvements, such as picnic areas, ball diamonds and restrooms, that are to be installed; an approximate timetable for development; estimated development and operating costs; and identified development funding sources. Public input should be sought during this stage to determine which park sites best meet location and natural feature objectives identified in the Recreation and Parks Plan.

Basically, the site evaluation determines at what cost the site can accomplish the objectives and accommodate the facilities identified in the Recreation and Parks Plan. The site evaluation information should be included in reports and recommendations to the Board of Supervisors to acquire new land for park use.

This second planning stage will ensure that development efforts meet actual needs identified in the Recreation and Parks Plan for the most effective and efficient use of available financing. It will also permit the Board of Supervisors to determine whether the County can finance operating costs to maintain the new facilities before the commitment to acquire is made.

Within the guidelines of the site evaluation plan and as development funding becomes available, construction plans should be developed for each project for which land is acquired. These detailed plans are the third phase in the planning process and should be the most detailed and comprehensive including review by the County departments and government agencies affected by the project. Because of their expense and importance of timeliness to comply with codes, these final plans would be best prepared immediately preceding actual construction of a park project.

#### EFFECT

To ensure the orderly and timely development of new facilities at existing or new park properties, thorough and systematic planning is essential. The best and most effective use of available funds cannot be assured by the Board of Supervisors unless they are completely informed of all benefits and total cost impacts of each acquisition and development.



It has not been determined whether the County can support the operating costs of planned capital improvements for which funding has been committed, or the operating costs of undeveloped park lands for which no development funds have yet been identified.

#### CAUSE

The Recreation and Parks Plan stressed the acquisition of land well in advance of the identification of financing sources for development and operation of park areas. The plan also encouraged acquisition in advance of updating Recreation and Parks Plan information on the need for more park facilities. There was little or no evaluation of whether the development of existing undeveloped park areas or new land acquisitions would best meet the needs identified in the Recreation and Parks Plan.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

23. The Parks and Recreation Department, with assistance from the Planning Department, should follow a more systematic park acquisition and development process. This process should include provisions for Board of Supervisors policy review of park development master plans, and their approval of specific land acquisitions and projects based upon Board approved site evaluation plans.
24. Until there is a risk of losing categorical park acquisition and/or development funding, acquisition and development of new park areas should be suspended until the Recreation and Parks Plan is updated. Such an update is currently in the 1978-79 work plan for the Planning Department, and the Parks and Recreation Revenue Sharing budget.

### 10. LANDSCAPE PLANS

#### FINDING SUMMARY

Master plans designating specific locations for various types and intensities of landscaping have not been developed for landscaped areas maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department. The intensity of landscaping at some locations is being increased without sufficient consideration of the effect on workload or limited maintenance resources.



## STATEMENT OF CONDITION

As indicated in the finding on "Standards of Service," the Department maintains landscaped areas at several locations such as the Courthouse Park, Kings Canyon Complex and John Ashjian Complex (Juvenile Hall), as well as 11 service areas, and 5 smaller County facilities such as branch libraries and justice courts.

Landscaping master plans have not been prepared to clearly define the type of landscaping such as lawns, shrubs, perennials, and annuals for specific areas of each landscaped location. The type of landscaping has generally either been determined by plans for new construction (buildings or parking lots), or because of past practices of having particular types of landscaping at certain locations.

In some instances, modifications of the type of landscaping have been undertaken by the Department. These modifications have also been made without a master plan defining limits on the amount of area for each level of landscaping.

In Courthouse Park, some landscaped sections are being gradually replanted, often primarily because of the initiative of the Senior Parks Groundsman assigned to this area. The areas designated for landscaping have been, and are being, planted with a wide variety of plants, many requiring much more frequent watering, spraying, replanting, and pruning than similar landscaped areas containing lower maintenance plants. Management has not developed a specific master plan for this area designating the type of landscaping for each section.

The Valley Medical Center Complex (VMC) and John Ashjian Complex consist of less intensely landscaped areas (areas requiring less maintenance) than Courthouse Park. VMC and the John Ashjian Complex receive a high degree of public use and have recently undergone extensive building and parking lot remodeling and expansion. There has been little modification of existing landscaped areas by assigned grounds maintenance staff.

Service areas and smaller County facilities generally have landscaping requiring minimal amounts of care. The type of landscaping at these areas has generally remained the same during the last few years.

## CRITERIA

Specific plans designating the degree or intensity of landscaping for each section of a landscaped area should be utilized. These should include designating areas for lawns, shrubs, groundcover, and annuals or perennials.

Development of landscaping master plans should expressly consider the amount of labor and other grounds maintenance costs attendant to their execution. Maintenance standards and work plans should be developed as recommended in other findings to accurately measure the ongoing impact of landscape plans on the Department's maintenance resources. Where a landscape plan alters an existing landscape pattern, conversion costs should be similarly assessed.

Landscaping master plans should be in conformance with the general character and purpose of the area. Some areas are designed primarily for aesthetic qualities and a casual atmosphere such as Courthouse Park where people may spend more time enjoying the landscaped area. This park is a visual greenbelt and warrants a greater number of high intensity landscaped areas, such as annual flowers, that require a higher level of care than areas landscaped with shrubs or groundcover. Other areas, such as the Valley Medical Center Complex, are functional high traffic areas and have less intense landscaping and more parking areas designed for easy access to public agencies with a minimal amount of time spent viewing landscaped areas.

While the basic purpose of landscaping is for improved appearance, it also may be designed to serve other functions. These include relaxation, expediting pedestrian traffic flow without sustaining damage to plants, dust control, solar screening of buildings to reduce energy loads, and preventing erosion. In addition to considering aesthetic appeal when landscaping an area, these other functions should be considered.

#### EFFECT

Sections of landscaped areas may have become overdeveloped with plants requiring extensive and specialized care beyond the capacity of budgeted maintenance resources.

Landscaping may have overemphasized one of several purposes or functions landscaping is to serve, to the detriment of other purposes.

#### CAUSE

The Department has attempted to improve the appearance of landscaping at Courthouse Park without a comprehensive master plan which explicitly considers all appropriate purposes of landscaping in each area within the park. At other areas, such as VMC, the instances of possible overdevelopment are not apparent, but the lack of specific plans increases the possibility of underdevelopment or inappropriate development.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

25. The Department should prepare a master landscaping design for each landscaped area it maintains. Each plan should explicitly consider the appropriate landscape purposes for each section at each site as a basis for determining design objectives. Design objectives, available resources and maintenance objectives should be considered in developing each plan.
26. Parks and Recreation Department management should periodically evaluate landscape plans in terms of conformance to the general character and purpose of the area. Conversion proposals should also be evaluated based upon, 1) how they improve conformance; 2) whether conversion costs can be financed, and; 3) if ongoing maintenance costs can be absorbed in the case of increases in intensity of landscaping, or materially relieve workload pressures in the case of decreases.
27. The more sizeable conversion proposals should be budgeted on a project basis and be explicitly considered in preparing the Department's annual grounds maintenance budget.

## 11. DEVELOPING LANDSCAPED AREAS

### FINDING SUMMARY

Areas to be landscaped at new County facilities are not always reviewed in a timely manner by the Parks and Recreation Department to offer recommendations on the best type of landscaping and to estimate maintenance requirements.

### STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The process for determining the type of landscaping at County facilities or projecting maintenance requirements for new areas is informal and simple. The Parks and Recreation Department is normally notified of new areas requiring landscaping after the plans for the project have been developed by the architect. The Department consults with the Public Works Department on the areas to be landscaped to determine the most desirable type of landscaping for the project.

This process has been utilized for recent projects such as the jail kitchen and the central warehouse. It generally allows sufficient time for Parks and Recreation Department input. However, in some instances, such as the Selma Library, earlier involvement could have avoided unnecessary construction and maintenance costs. In this instance, the design of the structure and landscaped area may have contributed to the current unhealthy condition of one of the trees on the site by allowing walkways to be built too close to the base of the tree. Another tree on the site was in poor condition before construction of the building. However, the structure was still designed to incorporate the tree in the total plan.

## CRITERIA

Specific procedures should be developed and followed for ensuring the timely Parks and Recreation Department involvement in developing landscaping designs at new County facilities including their input on cost implications of maintenance requirements of alternative designs. The Department's involvement in determining the appropriate landscaping should begin when initial discussions are held between the Public Works Department and the architect, and recur prior to the architect developing a final set of plans. This would materially help avoid costly development mistakes and unnecessary maintenance costs.

## EFFECT

Because the Parks and Recreation Department currently reviews landscape needs after development of the design stage for a project, meaningful recommendations on landscaped areas are not always possible because time consuming and costly changes to plans could be necessary. As a result, unnecessary funds may be expended on landscaped areas for development and maintenance.

## CAUSE

The current process used by the Public Works Department for the review of landscape areas at new County facilities does not always ensure the timely review of proposed landscaping by the Parks and Recreation Department.

## RECOMMENDATION

28. The current process for the review of proposed landscaping at new County facilities should be modified by the Public Works Department to ensure review by the Parks and Recreation Department at the preliminary design stage of all construction projects affecting landscaping development and maintenance.



## SECTION V. FISCAL PROCEDURES

### 12. EFFECTIVENESS OF BUDGET CONTROLS

#### FINDING SUMMARY

The Parks and Recreation Department has generally demonstrated an ability to keep expenditures within budgeted amounts. The one exception is the Transportation and Travel account which in two of the last three fiscal years exceeded the budgeted amount. The Department should develop targets indicating the expected level of usage for Garage vehicles.

#### STATEMENT OF CONDITION

Currently, the Department receives monthly budget reports from the Auditor-Controller's Office. These reports indicate the percentage of budgeted amounts expended to date and are useful to management in controlling expenditures. Also, the Public Works Garage provides a monthly report on vehicle and equipment usage by work area, such as specific parks. This information makes it possible for management to monitor usage on each piece of equipment on a regular basis. During the fiscal year 1976-77, these Garage billings were lagging several months behind and it was difficult to evaluate expenditure levels until late in the year.

We compared the approved budgets and actual expenditures for the fiscal years 1974-75, 1975-76, and 1976-77. In fiscal year 1974-75, the Transportation and Travel account was overspent by \$73,960 or 90.5% (\$81,514 budgeted; \$155,474 actually expended). During fiscal year 1975-76, the amount spent exceeded the budgeted amount by \$33,612 or 27.5% (\$122,186 budgeted; \$155,798 actually expended).

There were also mid-year Garage rate increases during these fiscal years that were not anticipated before budgets were finalized. In fiscal year 1974-75, the rates were increased between 8 and 10 percent, and in fiscal year 1975-76, they were increased between 15 and 25 percent depending on the type of equipment. These rate increases caused several departments to overspend their Transportation and Travel accounts, forcing intra-departmental budget transfers or transfers from general contingency funds.

In fiscal year 1976-77, the Department's Transportation and Travel account was kept within budgeted amounts with considerable difficulty and special control efforts. In order to reduce Garage charges, vehicle usage was sharply curtailed by the Department for a few months and more closely monitored by regularly charting vehicle mileage and equipment hours of use. Some equipment usage is recorded by miles driven and others by hours used. In this manner, it was possible to readily identify and question usage and encourage better performance. The Transportation and Travel account ended the 1976-77 fiscal year within the budgeted amount for this account (\$168,135 budgeted; \$160,628, or 95.5% actually expended) and \$4,830 or 3.8% more than the amount spent in the previous fiscal year.

Currently, usage is not charted, but is monitored by utilizing the monthly Auditor-Controller's report to attempt to keep costs within the budgeted amount. Targets of usage for assigned vehicles have not been developed. Only occasionally is usage for particular vehicles compared with vehicles assigned to comparable areas to detect variations of use.

#### CRITERIA

Expenditure information should be closely monitored to control costs during the fiscal year to remain within budgeted allowances.

Vehicle and equipment usage should be closely monitored and controlled by regularly reviewing individual usage patterns. These usage patterns should be within acceptable usage standards for the particular vehicle assignment. If usage is not within these prescribed standards, management should investigate and where appropriate, corrective action should be taken.

A minimum number of employees should use vehicles, particularly during the winter months, in order to reduce winter usage during the slow season and promote accountability year-round.

#### EFFECT

Budgeted amounts for various department accounts may be fully expended prior to the end of the fiscal year if expenditures are not closely monitored and corrective action taken on a timely basis when needed.

Minimal management scrutiny permitted employees to become accustomed to higher usage levels of vehicles.

Usage of vehicles may currently be excessive when compared to vehicles assigned to comparable areas, indicating possibly unneeded equipment charges.

Department activities may be suddenly disrupted by a drastic curtailment of vehicle usage to decrease expenditures and compensate for previous overuse.

### CAUSE

The size and geographic dispersement of landscaped areas, poorly defined equipment usage targets, and employees not knowing the significance of limiting equipment usage to essential levels has made it difficult for the operators of vehicles to help management control usage and costs.

### RECOMMENDATION

29. The Parks and Recreation Department should develop usage targets for equipment based upon work plans and regularly monitor its use to detect variances from the norm. This will enable management to control charges for use that may be greater than that budgeted and that are unnecessary for department operations.

## 13. PARKS AND RECREATION RATES

### FINDING SUMMARY

The rates developed by the Auditor-Controller for Parks and Recreation Department services provided County departments and local government agencies should be revised to conform with the Board of Supervisors resolution exempting other local government agencies from charges for indirect costs of County services, and to promote maximum revenue recovery from the State and Federal governments.

### STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The hourly billing rates for grounds maintenance services provided to other local agencies are not in conformance with a resolution adopted by the Board of Supervisors dated December 28, 1976 (Exhibit V). This resolution indicates that only direct costs and not County overhead charges (i.e., indirect costs) are to be charged other local agencies for

services provided by the County. The resolution also indicates that entire County costs (direct and indirect) will be recovered from the State and Federal governments and regional agencies.

The Auditor-Controller last conducted a cost study for the Parks and Recreation Department in October, 1977 setting hourly rates for Parks Groundsman classifications through the Supervising Parks Groundsman level. Two rate structures were established. Both include direct costs of salaries, employee benefits, Parks and Recreation Department management and administrative support salaries, and charges to service and supplies accounts. One hourly rate schedule is for services the Parks and Recreation Department provides to County departments which excludes County-wide indirect costs, and the other rate schedule is for local, State and Federal agencies which includes County-wide indirect costs. Direct costs of Garage equipment are to be charged based on billings from the Garage for actual usage.

The Auditor-Controller recommended rates to be charged other agencies were higher to reflect the indirect cost according to the Consolidated County-Wide Cost Allocation Plan. This plan distributes a proportionate share of cost for the Board of Supervisors and support departments such as the Administrative Office, Personnel Management Division, and Auditor-Controller, as well as County-wide depreciation for fixed assets. Use of this rate for billings to other local agencies would not be in compliance with the December 28, 1976 Board of Supervisors Resolution to exclude indirect costs from charges to local agencies.

The Auditor-Controller recommended rates to be charged other County departments do not include indirect costs of the Consolidated County-Wide Cost Allocation Plan. This prevents County departments from complying with the December 28, 1976 Board of Supervisors Resolution to pass their full share of Parks and Recreation services costs along to the State and Federal governments as part of their reimbursement claims.

Currently, the Department is not using the Auditor-Controller's hourly rates to bill other County departments or other agencies for landscape maintenance. Instead, billing amounts are based only upon the direct costs of actual total salaries and fringe benefits of employees performing the billed services; actual expenditures for supplies bought from private vendors specifically for the billed service; and mileage or usage of Public Works Garage vehicles and equipment for the billed service. No Parks and Recreation Department billings include the costs of supplies from department stock or County-wide indirect costs. This practice, too, does not comply with the Board of Supervisors Resolution of December 28, 1976.



## CRITERIA

To ensure appropriate County cost recovery for services provided regional agencies, and for County department costs of operating State and Federal programs and grant projects, the Parks and Recreation Department should use a billing rate structure which reflects all costs. The rate structure used to bill local agencies should comply with the Board of Supervisors Resolution of December 28, 1976 to exclude indirect costs.

Rates should be regularly updated and reflect true and current costs within guidelines established by the Board of Supervisors.

Rates which are developed by the Auditor-Controller should be utilized by the Parks and Recreation Department.

## EFFECT

Maximum cost reimbursement revenues for Parks and Recreation Department services have not been recovered by the County because appropriate costs have not been billed to departments and other local agencies receiving grounds maintenance services from the Parks and Recreation Department.

## CAUSE

Rates recommended by the Auditor-Controller for use in billing for Parks and Recreation Department services did not include all appropriate costs. The Parks and Recreation Department has not followed procedures for the proper billing of County departments and local agencies through rates established by the Auditor-Controller.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

30. That the rates for Parks and Recreation Department services provided to other County departments be revised by the Auditor-Controller to include indirect costs according to the Consolidated County-Wide Cost Allocation Plan. This will ensure that full cost recovery will be obtained from the State and Federal governments and regional agencies.
31. That the rates for Parks and Recreation Department services provided other local agencies be revised by the Auditor-Controller to include only the direct costs of the Parks and Recreation Department.

32. That the Parks and Recreation Department revise its current billing process to use appropriate rates established by the Auditor-Controller and actual charges for Public Works Garage vehicle usage.

DEPARTMENT COMMENT

The billing process was revised in August, 1978.

EXHIBIT V

Index No. 76-2804  
December 28, 1976  
(010-0190)

BEFORE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

OF THE COUNTY OF FRESNO

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of Charges of Costs )  
to Governmental Agencies for County ) RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING  
Services. ) GUIDELINES THEREFOR

WHEREAS, it appears that there is a question as to the proper method of the county charging for and recapturing its costs in a legal and equitable manner when it renders services to other governmental agencies; and

WHEREAS, it appears that for some time past the Auditor-Controller has been including in such costs both direct and indirect costs, the later including what is generally known as county overhead charges; and

WHEREAS, after hearing the auditor, representatives of the cities and school districts, this board is of the opinion that it should establish guidelines therefor establishing in general the principle that such costs to be recovered from governmental agencies within the county should include only direct costs;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the following guidelines shall be applied by the Auditor-Controller and other county officers responsible therefor in charging other governmental agencies for services rendered to them by the county:

1. As to those governmental agencies which provide services of a local nature and represent areas lying wholly or partly within the County of Fresno such as the cities within said county, school districts and other special districts, the county will recover only its direct costs for services rendered to such agencies.

2. As to governmental agencies such as the state or federal government or any regional agency of which the County of Fresno territory is relatively minor, the county will recover its entire costs including direct and indirect according to sound

accounting practices

1           3. Where only direct costs are to be recovered, the  
2 auditor-controller and other county officers responsible therefor  
3 will ascertain such direct costs in full according to sound  
4 accounting practices making appropriate allocations where required.

5           4. The foregoing guidelines shall apply to all types of  
6 services rendered by the county to other governmental agencies,  
7 including but not limited to elections, police protection and legal  
8 services but shall not apply where a contract exists setting forth  
9 specific amounts.

10           5. Where indirect charges have heretofore been made to  
11 agencies which pursuant to these guidelines would have been required  
12 to pay only direct charges and the agencies have been billed there-  
13 for, the total charges shall be recalculated by the Auditor-  
14 Controller eliminating any indirect charges made. Such recalcula-  
15 tion shall be made for any services rendered during the calendar  
16 years 1975 and 1976 and adjustment made accordingly, including  
17 refunds of payments made in excess of these guidelines.

18           The foregoing resolution was passed and adopted at a  
19 regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Fresno,  
20 State of California, on the 28th day of December, 1976,  
21 by the following vote, to wit:

22           AYES: Supervisors Levy, Johnson, Bronzan, Ventura

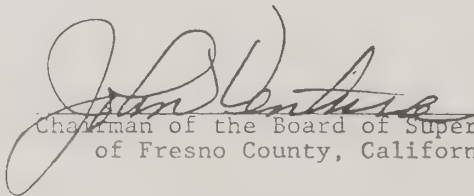
23           NOES: Supervisor Donaldson

24           ABSENT: None

25

26

27

  
Chairman of the Board of Supervisors  
of Fresno County, California

28           ATTEST:

29           M. G. WINGETT, Clerk of  
30           the Board of Supervisors

31           By

Deputy



## SECTION VI. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION AND PARK USAGE

### 14. USAGE OF PARKS

#### FINDING SUMMARY

Park areas generally receive heavy usage during the summer months. However, because an accurate count of the number of visitor vehicles is not maintained, except at the campgrounds at Choinumni and Pine Flat, it is difficult to determine whether every park area is receiving enough use to justify continued operation, or if some parks are over-used and should be relieved by expansion or new companion facilities.

#### STATEMENT OF CONDITION

Currently, accurate data on the number of visitors to the parks is not kept except for the two campgrounds at Choinumni and Pine Flat. Records are kept for campgrounds because park personnel must visit each campsite on a daily basis to collect camping fees. Usage at the Pine Flat campground, which has 52 overnight camping spaces, averaged 3,170 visitors per month during the spring and summer months of April through September, 1977, and 908 visitors per month during the fall and winter months of January through March and October through December, 1977. At the Choinumni campground with 75 overnight camping spaces, there were 2,507 visitors per month in the summer and 722 per month in the winter. Records of usage for picnic areas at these or other parks are not kept.

The estimated operating cost for Pine Flat and Choinumni campgrounds for the six months of the fall and winter season of 1977 was \$37,000. During this time, the revenue collected from camping fees and the sale of firewood amounted to \$5,022. The net cost (\$37,000 - \$5,022) was \$31,978, or \$19.62 per each of the average 1630 visitors per month for both campgrounds. The estimated operating cost for the six spring and summer months of 1977 was \$56,740. During this time, the revenue collected from camping fees and firewood sales amounted to \$17,629. The net cost (\$56,740 - \$17,629) was \$39,111, or \$6.89 per each of the average 5,677 visitors per month for both campgrounds. These two campgrounds are in close proximity to each other and are maintained by the same maintenance personnel, equipment and supplies.

Several park personnel did indicate during interviews that the parks receive the heaviest usage during the weekends and holidays from approximately April through September. The number of visitors decreases significantly during the period of October through March.

The exception to the heavy seasonal usage is for the Mineral Springs Park located approximately 18 miles west of Coalinga. This park was felt to have continually low usage, particularly in the summer months with slightly heavier usage during the winter months.

The Department has attempted to consider usage of parks in planning for specific park projects. For example, the replacement and addition of roads and picnic sites at Avocado Lake Park has been based on previous heavy usage of this facility.

### CRITERIA

Appropriate economical means to monitor current park usage should be utilized to validate the continuing need for existing parks and help determine where additional park development or expansion would be desirable. Accurate usage information would also aid in deploying personnel to adequately respond to litter and trash pick-up needs and other maintenance activities that vary with public use of parks.

### EFFECT

The need for the continued operation and the future expansion and development of individual parks cannot be accurately determined without measuring usage.

Personnel cannot be optimally deployed to respond to changing levels of use and resulting maintenance requirements.

### CAUSE

Since limited maintenance activities such as fee collection, trash pick-up and litter collection are significantly affected by park usage, the Department has relied only on visual observations of park areas to indicate where personnel should be deployed.

However, the Department has felt that limited available funds should be used, for example for promotional materials, rather than to purchase counting devices. It was felt that the usage or usage information generated with such devices would not be sufficient to justify requests for resources to maintain park areas or develop new facilities.

Because of the general absence of a formalized planning process, the Department has not needed more accurate usage figures.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

33. The Department should explore the feasibility of utilizing a reliable monitoring system, such as a vehicle counting device, to determine the pattern of usage at each park area. This information would be gathered randomly or continuously depending upon cost and acceptable tolerances of accuracy needed for planning purposes.
34. The Department should utilize this information in developing work plans for grounds maintenance for each existing park, for validating the need for current park facilities, and for identifying the need for facility expansion.

#### 15. EQUIPMENT REPAIR AND REPLACEMENT PROCEDURES

#### FINDING SUMMARY

The current procedures for determining equipment replacement or repair should be more specific and formalized to ensure the maximum economic use is received from each piece of equipment.

#### STATEMENT OF CONDITION

The Parks and Recreation Department currently utilizes two main categories of power equipment. Larger equipment, such as pick-up and dump trucks, tractors, and large lawn mowers, are assigned to the Department by the Public Works Garage. The Garage is responsible for all repairs and replacement of this equipment. Small equipment, such as lawn edgers, chain saws, and assorted smaller lawnmowers, are part of the fixed assets of the Parks and Recreation Department and are repaired and replaced with department personnel and funds. The Department currently has 274 pieces of small equipment. This includes 48 lawnmowers, 19 lawn edgers, 22 chain saws, 8 back pack blowers, 11 weed eater edgers, and 11 yard vacuums. The remaining equipment is an assortment of special equipment such as saws, drills, routers, trailers, and pumps. Based upon interviews with department

personnel, the equipment generally appears adequate to maintain assigned areas. Generally, the Department has kept abreast of new equipment technology and acquired new labor-saving devices such as the weed eater edgers.

Department equipment replacement criteria consists primarily of an individual evaluation of each piece of equipment by an Assistant Parks Superintendent assigned the responsibility of recommending replacement or appropriate repairs. Guidelines are not written, but the general condition, age, and amount of cost to repair a piece of equipment are considered before deciding on whether to repair or replace.

Garage equipment usage is metered either hourly or by mileage. By contrast, Parks and Recreation Department equipment usage is not recorded on a regular basis. Actual usage can only be estimated by personnel operating the equipment and their input is sometimes considered in making replacement decisions.

In July, 1977, the Parks Groundsman II assigned the day-to-day duty of picking up equipment and performing minor repairs began keeping records of repair costs for individual pieces of equipment. A card is maintained for each piece of equipment by general type. The date repairs are performed by outside agencies or parts are installed by the Parks Groundsman II are noted on the card. The amount of time expended by the Parks Groundsman, the amount of down time for the equipment, the date the equipment was put into service, indications of wear, and the hours of usage to date are not noted on the card.

The Parks Groundsman II has also started to maintain a card on each piece of equipment based upon the area to which it is assigned. These cards for all the park areas have not been completed. This card system contains the same information as the cards maintained by general type of equipment and make it possible to identify equipment repair expenses by area.

Invoices for private vendors are kept in chronological order by the Account Clerk, but these do not readily identify individual equipment repair histories and are only occasionally used to aid in making decisions on the disposition of equipment.

## CRITERIA

Complete records of equipment acquisition, maintenance (parts and labor), indications of wear, anticipated major maintenance service, down time and usage should be utilized to aid in making repair and replacement decisions.

Replacement criteria should provide for the systematic and regular replacement of equipment which is no longer economical to operate.



Replacement criteria should include the cost of repair versus replacement, efficiency of current and new equipment as a labor-saving device, availability of parts, and appropriateness of current equipment for maintenance needs.

#### EFFECT

Replacement and repair criteria may not be uniformly applied to all comparable equipment because of incomplete data on the equipment.

The wrong type of make or model of equipment may continue to be purchased because of incomplete equipment records that would otherwise show unfavorable lifetime costs.

#### CAUSE

Because of the large number and variety of pieces of equipment, the Department has not spent the time necessary to develop specific replacement and repair criteria and operating data to ensure the most economical service from each piece of equipment.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

35. Methods for collecting and recording information on equipment usage should be developed.
36. Repair and replacement data should be compiled and utilized in making decisions on the disposition of larger pieces of equipment.
37. Repair and maintenance record cards should include the following additional information: the date the equipment commenced service, the time spent by Parks and Recreation Department personnel in repairs and service, the cost of replacement parts, the cost of outside labor, indications of wear, the amount of down time, anticipated major service, and what area used the equipment.

### 16. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

#### FINDING SUMMARY

There is a need for accurate and current statistics on department productivity and workload.

## STATEMENT OF CONDITION

Currently, only minimal statistics on department productivity and workload are collected. These include the usage of the campgrounds at Choinumni Park and Pine Flat Park; usage of group picnic areas; usage of equipment assigned from the Garage; and the distribution of the working hours of department employees to park and landscaped areas. Only the Garage equipment usage and labor distribution is summarized on a monthly or bi-weekly basis. This information is presented on computer printouts which are used only to bill special districts and departments for grounds maintenance services. The information on usage of the campgrounds and group picnic areas is not regularly summarized.

## CRITERIA

The Department should have an explicit, written policy setting forth its management information objectives and requirements. These objectives might be to measure activity on a one-time or ongoing basis in order to assess productivity, detect variations from norms, shift resources to meet workload changes or trends, plan manpower or other resource requirements, determine the effects of policy or procedure changes, or other purposes. The definition of specific information requirements to meet chosen objectives should evolve carefully to be certain to collect only information most useful to management in monitoring and assessing department activities. Not only the type of data collected, but its form and frequency, should be planned to achieve specific purposes.

A useful management information system will usually consist of several types of data. Workload or units of activity statistics are elementary building blocks of an information system. Relevant workload statistics might include number of acres maintained, usage of park areas, projected person-hours and equipment usage required for maintenance to meet work plans for specific areas or equipment maintenance and repair, and work backlogs. To this data may be added such activity factors as person-hours expended for certain functions, manpower deployment, and completion of work plan tasks. Finally, productivity measures may be made to compare notes of actual accomplishments to work plan goals.

The selection of these or other data for collection and summary must be based upon the output information being sought. That in turn is based upon what management is trying to learn or monitor (the information objective).

Management information objectives will also determine the manner in which data should be summarized. These choices would include data by day of the week, weekly totals, monthly, quarterly, annually, and year-to-date. Comparisons may be

made by chosen time periods such as the same quarter last year, same year-to-date last year, etc., to detect trends.

Exception reporting is another form of management information which consists of counting the frequency of activities which fall outside acceptable parameters or norms of time or accuracy. This type of information presents different collection problems, but is easily summarized.

### EFFECT

Many possible types of information useful to the efficient and effective management of park and landscaped areas are not being collected and used by supervisory and management personnel. The Department is depriving itself of a valuable tool to evaluate, compare, and thereby plan and control the activities and cost of its operation. Management information systems are part of a variety of feedback sources needed to help management determine how, when, where and why to redirect the course of operations.

Justification for personnel, supplies and equipment cannot presently be based upon documented workload variations and productivity standards.

The performance of personnel is not monitored as effectively as possible. This allows trends or variations in performance and efficiency to go undetected.

### CAUSE

The Department has not comprehensively assessed its management information needs, nor developed and implemented a statistical collection system.

### RECOMMENDATION

38. The Department should develop an explicit, written policy outlining its management information objectives and requirements, and implement systems to capture the information necessary to satisfy those needs.

## 17. COMPLIANCE WITH ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

### FINDING SUMMARY

The Parks and Recreation Department appears to be in compliance with applicable County ordinances and Board of Supervisors resolutions. Concern has been expressed by department personnel over public infractions of miscellaneous regulations such as driving automobiles in unauthorized areas of the parks.

### STATEMENT OF CONDITION

We have reviewed Sections 13.12 through 13.16.050 of the Fresno County Ordinance Code which prescribe duties and regulations for the Parks and Recreation Department. These include the appointment of a tree board, the designation of a master tree list for planting in County right-of-ways, general duties of the Director, tree planting policy for new subdivisions and miscellaneous regulations for park areas. Also reviewed were several Board of Supervisors resolutions adopting the Parks and Trails element of the Recreation and Parks Plan and authorizing the expenditures of various grant and bond funds for park development. The Department appears to be in compliance with these ordinances and directives.

Concern has been expressed to us by several members of the Department staff over public infractions and miscellaneous sections of the Fresno County Ordinance Code pertaining to park areas. Incidents of vandalism and parking or driving vehicles in unauthorized areas do occur in the parks and camping areas. To minimize illegal parking, barriers of large rocks or posts embedded in the ground have been placed along some park roads.

Also, more serious offenses, such as burglaries of storage areas, have occurred. The Department has taken preventive measures to minimize losses and damages to property by constructing secure vaults for tool and equipment storage and installing burglar alarms at some storage buildings located in the parks. These measures were initiated after some park areas had incidences of burglaries reported.

Also, staggering staffing at some park areas ensure personnel are assigned to the parks on weekends when they can discourage regulatory violations. Weekend staffing during May through September includes one Parks Groundsman at each of the following parks: Lost Lake, Avocado, Laton-Kingston, and Skaggs Bridge. Kearney Park usually has one Senior Parks Groundsman and two to three Parks Groundsmen. Normally, four Parks Groundsmen are assigned for weekends at each campground



at Choinumni and Pine Flat. The Department's personnel have no law enforcement authority, but their presence serves as a deterrent to violations of park rules and property damage.

### CRITERIA

Applicable ordinances and Board of Supervisors resolutions should be followed.

Preventive measures to discourage the breaking of park regulations should be utilized.

### EFFECT

The Department is taking many reasonable steps to protect existing facilities, but initial construction projects have sometimes had protective features such as curbing deleted.

### CAUSE

The Department has not developed master plans for each park area that would include preventive measures to discourage breaking of park regulations.

In some instances, inflation has eroded development funds and protective features have been deleted to keep projects within budgeted amounts.

### RECOMMENDATION

39. The need for the installation of security vaults and burglar alarms for the storage of Parks and Recreation Department equipment and physical barriers along roads should be included in the master plans for the development of each park. If feasible, these features should be included in the plan and provided in the initial construction of the facility.





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